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# EVERYDAY ETHICS

BY

ELLA LYMAN CABOT

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# PREFACE

A SUCCESSFUL book on methods of teaching ethics will improve in the schoolroom the art of instruction in the most difficult province of study and practice.

Ethics relates to all manner of deeds and habits of doing which concern one's fellow men, either as private individuals or as members of institutions—members of the social whole.

One may conduct himself in such a manner as to obstruct the actions of his fellow men and thereby reduce their labours and strivings to a nullity, more or less, according to his power and skill. Or, on the other hand, he may act in such a manner as to reënforce their labours and strivings and increase the net product of human endeavour.

The fact that there are rational objects to be achieved by humanity—name them collectively as the conquest of nature for man's use and the peaceful combination of man with men to the end that each individual may share in the experience of all individuals —these objects ought to be the common aim of all rational beings: this fact furnishes the basis and norm of ethics. It makes evident the Source of Power. The individual who promotes the twofold end of civilisation increases the aggregate power of mankind and at the same time shares in that power. His own help

of others is reflected back upon him. He gets in exchange for the mite that he contributes, the right to participate in the positive outcome of the labours of all. This is a true source of power and it can be approached in only one sure way—by the adoption of ethical action as a habit, and by continuous growth in ethical insight.

Human power consists in the control of nature and the ability to effect combinations with one's fellow men.

Ethics is in the first place a matter of the will; it concerns the form of doing.

Good breeding consists chiefly in correct habits of practice rather than in correct modes of thinking. And good behaviour is a bundle of good habits. All the habits that facilitate combination with one's fellow men in matters of common weal concern the will rather than the intellect.

Thus in the school, behaviour is the first consideration. For it makes possible the concerted work—work in classes. The class work of the school is of an altogether higher order than mere individual study under a private tutor. For in the class the pupil sees the failures and successes of his schoolmates who are of the same grade of progress as himself; he measures his work by their work and discovers from day to day other ways of looking at the subject of the lesson. He gradually learns to reënforce his own insight by the insights of others. But the individual pursuing his work by himself under a tutor is not aided in this salutary way. His teacher is in another orbit and does not help him by emulation or vicarious experience—the sight of others in the same plight as himself and

yet achieving success by one or another device of industry and persistence.

In order that the school may perfect its method of teaching the individual by the class, there are certain ethical habits necessary, regularity of attendance, of study, of concerted action—all pupils intent on the same thing. Next there is punctuality; readiness and alertness, even more necessary than regularity in making the school with its class work effective. Then, thirdly, there is silence, a self-repression of tendencies to disorder, a subjugation of the animal proclivity to prate and chatter. Silence on the part of pupils enables them all to concentrate their attention on the exposition of the teacher; its opposite has the effect of producing distraction.

The activity of each nullifies the activity of his fellows. The morbid desire to attract attention to one's self is repressed by the school virtue of silence; respect for the rights of others and for the triumph of the grand aim of the school takes its place.

A fourth schoolroom virtue is industry in the form of work at the assigned task. It takes on one of two forms: first the individual absorption of each by himself in the prescribed study or investigation of the topic for to-day's lesson. This is an absorption in which the pupil goes from the external, first aspects of a subject to the secondary ones, deeper and higher. He learns to test and discard the superficial and to seize essentials. He learns to strive for insight into profound principles.

The other side of school industry is the alert and

critical attention to the work of one's fellows under the review of the teacher in the class exercise. In the former kind of industry the pupil is absorbed in his own work oblivious of the presence of teacher and fellow pupils. He is using his whole might to master his task. In the latter kind of industry the pupil is concentrating his attention on the work of others. Each form of attention is essential to culture.

In the lines of direct will-training the school is potent in building up good habits of coöperation with one's fellows. By effort and reiterated precept of the teacher good habits in respect to regularity, punctuality, silence and industry get formed and become a second nature, unconsciously a part of the personal make-up of each pupil.

But because these are unconscious habits they have sunk below the strictly moral plane of action, for they are more or less mechanical. The truly moral must be connected with a world-view—a theory of a moral order of the universe.

There should be formed a habit of looking for the rational ground of each action—a habit of ethical thinking that amounts to conscientiousness. The bundle of practical habits results from mechanical obedience to the school order and although it serves great ends in that it makes possible coöperation with one's fellows, the pupil may not understand the rationale of his practical habits and they may have merely a conservative influence preserving the traditional use and wont that stands in the way of readjustment to higher ideals.

Thus it happens that the second way to ethical life belongs to the intellect rather than to the will directly. It concerns a competent discussion of the grounds of conduct—the standards of morality. Along this second line of ethical theory and practice—which is that chosen by Mrs. Cabot in this book—the somewhat advanced student is called away from ethical habit to the consideration of the moral grounds of all habit. It is especially the consideration to which the future leader of public opinion should give attention in his own preparatory studies. It is moreover specially the line of ethical training needed by the school teacher, although not to the exclusion of a careful study of the rationale of the discipline of school order and of unconscious habit in the elements of good breeding.

The teacher should know the application of the highest ethical principles and be able to bring them to the aid of the immature mind struggling to free itself in the presence of a conflict of duties.

A careful training of the teacher in discriminating the motives of conduct is useful, not merely in the practical settlement of cases of discipline that arise, but—what is of even more importance—useful in getting an insight into all the studies of the school which have human nature as their content or subject; for example, literature, history, biography, economics, commerce, politics, and the like.

Great stress is laid by the author on the choice of a special calling in life and on the moral support it gives to character. In fact it is made a very impor-

tant norm for the decision of one's course in the presence of conflicting duties.

Each activity of the soul, memory, imagination, courage, feeling, the sense of honour, has its moral aspect. It contributes to strengthen or to weaken the moral character. The discussion of details under this head forms one of the most valuable features of the present treatise and cannot fail to aid the teacher who gives it careful study.

Care is taken by the author to avoid sentimentalism on the one hand and on the other hand the approach to unintelligible abstractions. The composition of the book is such that live questions are everywhere introduced and the interest of the reader is aroused at the outset and held firmly to the end.

William T. Harris.

Washington, 1905.

# CONTENTS


CHAPTER PAGE

I. The Diffusion of Ethics

I. Rise and Spread of Ethical Questions . . . . 1
II. Virtue the Condition of Success . . . . . 3
III. All Interests Lead to Ethics . . . . . 7
IV. Ethics is one Outlook upon Everything in the World . . . . . 9
V. What the Study of Ethics can Accomplish . . 10

II. Boundaries

I. No Moral Responsibility without Choice . . . 17
II. The Boundary Line between Voluntary and Involuntary Acts is often Difficult to Trace . 20
III. We are Responsible for Preparing to become Non-Responsible . . . . . 22
IV. We are Always Responsible for our Will . . . 27
V. Necessity for Periods of Non-Responsibility . . 29

III. The Power of Purpose

I. The Distinctive Qualities of a Purpose . . . 32
II. The Moral Life is the Purposeful Life . . . . 35
III. Purpose Classifies Acts as Right or Wrong . . 37
IV. Ethics is Concerned with all Acts which Embody a Purpose . . . . . 40
V. A Purpose is a Sign and Source of Power . . . 43

IV. Goodness, the Essence of Manhood

I. Goodness is Fitness for a Chosen Purpose . . 46
II. Nothing is Forever Purposeless or Worthless . . 49
III. Goodness Involves Sacrifice for the Sake of Fulfilment . . . . . 51
IV. The Likeness between Goodness and Virtue . . 52
V. The Difference between Goodness and Virtue . 55

V. How to Judge Purposes

I. To Judge any Act we must Know its Life History 59
II. The Good Purpose is Carefully Chosen and Loyally Followed . . . . . 62
III. It Avoids both Inertia and Dissipation . . . 70
IV. Virtue is the Control of Impulse by Purpose . . 74

VI. The Darkness of Sin

I. Sin is Avoidance of Light . . . . . 77
II. It is our own Power Turned against Ourself . . 86
III. It is Wilful Abandonment of our Aim . . . . 90

VII. The Light of Conscience

I. Conscience is the Sensible and Timely Will to Know the Right Act . . . . . 93
II. It is Openness to the Light of Truth . . . . 97
III. We can be Overscrupulous, not Overconscientious . . . . . 104

VIII. Conscience, Custom and Law

I. The Conscience of the Past, as Expressed in Law and Custom . . . . . 108
II. The Relation of Law to Morality . . . . . 110
III. The Relation of Custom to Morality . . . 118
(a) The Significance of Custom . . . . 119
(b) The Effect of Custom on the Sense of Guilt . . . . . 122

IX. Interests as Life Givers and Life Savers

I. We See with our Interests, because they are Ourselves . . . . . 125
II. The Distinction of an Interest from a Wish or a Liking . . . . . 127
III. Interests as Reformers . . . . . 129
IV. All Subjects may become of Interest . . . . 135
V. By the Deepening Process of Work and of Insight 138

X. The Choice of Interests

I. The Common Nature of Interests . . . . . 142
II. Classification of Types of Interest . . . . . 144
III. Indications of the Right Choice of Interest . . 155

XI. Effort, Sacrifice, and Drudgery

I. The Relation of Growth to Effort . . . . . 158
II. The Tests of Right Sacrifice . . . . . 161
III. Sacrifice ought always to be a Means to Self-Fulfilment . . . . . 167
IV. The Permanent Need of Effort . . . . . 169

XII. Selfishness

I. Selfhood is Essential to Moral Life . . . . . 173
II. My Self Consists of all with which I am Identified . . . . . 177
III. Selfishness is Wilful Narrowness in Personal Relations . . . . . 179
IV. Every Unselfish Act Breaks its Shell of Narrowness . . . . . 184

XIII. Sympathy

I. Sympathy Expresses the Width of Selfhood . . 188
II. Perfected Sympathy is Realisation of the Truth . 191
III. And must Include Firmness and Common Sense . 194
IV. Sympathy Grows by Intimate Knowledge and Devotion . . . . . 198
V. And becomes a Creative Force . . . . . 200

XIV. Imagination

I. The Meaning of Imagination . . . . . 202
II. It is Essential to the Fulfilment of any Aim . . 204
III. Faults due to Lack of Imagination . . . . . 209

XV. Memory

I. Memory is Central in Human Life . . . . . 215
II. By the Use of Memory we Overcome Temptation 217
III. The Cultivation of Memory . . . . . 220
IV. Exclusion is one Aspect of Memory . . . . 223
V. To Remember is to Attain Integrity . . . . 225

XVI. Courage

I. The Difference between Courage and Fearlessness 228
II. Courage is the Effort to Control Fear . . . . 230
III. Suggestions for the Conquest of Fear . . . . 233

XVII. Thought Aglow with Feeling

I. The Inadequacy of Inarticulate Feeling . . . 240
II. Thought and Feeling Supplement one another . 243
III. Expression through Art . . . . . 249

XVIII. Thought and Action

I. Action without Evasion . . . . . 253
II. Times when Thought should be Controlled . . 257
III. The Bliss of Ignorance is Alien to Growth . . 260
IV. Thought in the Presence of Temptation . . . 262

XIX. Truth

I. The Corrosion of Falsehood . . . . . 265
II. Reasons for Truthfulness . . . . . 267
III. Truthfulness is the Effort to Convey an Accurate Impression . . . . . 270
IV. The Causes and Treatment of Lying . . . . 273

XX. Truth Speaking as a Fine Art

I. Speaking the Truth in Love . . . . . 281
II. The Acquirement of Skill in Truth Speaking . . 283
III. The Relation of Truth to Loyalty . . . . . 289
IV. Truth as the Guardian of Character . . . . 293

XXI. Open-Mindedness and Prejudice

I. Prejudice due to a Mistaken Idea of Loyalty . . 296
II. The Strength of Open-mindedness . . . . . 298
III. Evils due to Prejudice . . . . . 301
IV. The Attainment of Fair-mindedness . . . . 306

XXII. Self-Government

I. The Paradoxical Nature of Self-government . . 312
II. The Ascent from Servitude to a Chosen Obedience 313
III. Disobedience as an Aspect of Loyal Consecration 319
IV. The Value of Self-government . . . . . 322

XXIII. The Use of Time

I. The Meaning of Saving Time . . . . . 325
II. Aimlessness and Disloyalty are the Thieves of Time . . . . . 327
III. The Moulding of Time to Our Ends . . . . 333
IV. Virtue and Timeliness . . . . . 337

TEACHERS' KEY . . . . . 341
INTRODUCTION . . . . . 343
METHODS OF TEACHING . . . . . 347
I. The Meaning of Ethics . . . . . 351
II. The Moral and the Involuntary . . . . . 355
III. The Power of a Purpose . . . . . 360
IV. Goodness and Badness . . . . . 364
V. Right and Wrong Judgments . . . . . 367
VI. The Darkness of Wrong-Doing . . . . . 370
VII. The Light of Conscience . . . . . 373
VIII. Conscience, Custom and Law . . . . . 376
IX. Interests as Life Givers and Life Savers . . 379
X. The Choice of Interests . . . . . 381
XI. Sacrifice and Drudgery . . . . . 385
XII. Selfishness . . . . . 388
XIII. Sympathy . . . . . 392
XIV. The Value of Imagination . . . . . 395
XV. Memory . . . . . 398
XVI. Courage . . . . . 401
XVII. Quick Feeling and Steady Thought . . . . 406
XVIII. Thought and Action . . . . . 409
XIX. Truth . . . . . 413
XX. Truth Speaking as a Fine Art . . . . . 417
XXI. Open-Mindedness and Prejudice . . . . . 421
XXII. Obedience and Self-Government . . . . . 425
XXIII. The Use of Time . . . . . 429
INDEX . . . . . 433

# EVERYDAY ETHICS

## CHAPTER I

## THE DIFFUSION OF ETHICS

### I

"You can keep no men long, nor Scotchmen at all, off moral or theological discussion. . . . They are to all the world what law is to lawyers, they are everybody's technicalities, the medium through which all consider life and the dialect in which they express their judgment."[1] Moral questions are incessantly discussed by old and young. "It is a disgrace that Tillman was acquitted!" "Mamma, Charlie ought not to knock down my card house." "Do you think it is right for me to spend so much on that silk waist?" "If you really want to learn the outer roll you should go skating every day that the ice will bear." Questions of right and wrong are woven into all conversation; they are as close to our life as the air we breathe; but this is not surprising, for anyone who has any interests whatsoever is concerned with ethical problems. The careful study of these issues which we so often touch upon and glide away from is my task in this book. The study of right-

[1] Robert Louis Stevenson, "Memories and Portraits," p. 153.

choosing and well-doing,—that is, of doing anything well,—is ethics; it is the study of what to do and how to do it.

No one begins his moral life by a deliberate choice. Before we know it we find ourselves standing knee-deep in the water of moral decisions and pulled this way and that by eddying currents, the opinions of parents and friends. We have been sent to school without being asked our opinion of its value, we have been told that it is babyish to cry, wicked to get dirty, and wrong to steal sugar; and we have lived close to some wonderful, long-suffering love which has influenced us far more than we begin to know. But sooner or later we are awakened by a decision of our own, great or small, and begin in a dim, fragmentary way to ponder questions of right and wrong,—that is, to study ethics.

For example, a boy finds himself possessed by a strong impulse to succeed in athletics or in some form of art, to become a great explorer, or to help the poor. If he wants to make a success in athletics, how ought he to go about it? Two questions immediately arise:—What opportunities are there? What are his own powers? To make a sensible decision, he must know the situation and his own abilities. He must make his choice within the field of athletics by studying sensibly the situation about him. The country is suited to certain sports rather than to others. If there is a wide stretch of land, it gives an opportunity for golf, a small level patch is exactly fitted for tennis, but not nearly large enough for a golf course,—the lack of water near by makes rowing impracticable, and

the remoteness from neighbours makes it difficult to organise a football eleven.

Circumstances seem to favour his playing tennis, but before deciding he must consider also his own power. Is he strong enough for tennis, or has he a weak wrist? Which game is the most interesting, and for which has he most skill? These questions must be answered before a wise decision can be made.

On the whole he decides to play golf. How shall he learn? Mainly in three ways. He must have instruction, he must practise, he must study the play of others.

II

We come next to a point of special interest. It turns out that if one is to succeed in playing golf, he must acquire and exercise patience, industry, concentration, perseverance, pluck, and self-sacrifice. In fact to do what he wants to do really well he must develop a group of powers which are really virtues. But this is not peculiar to athletics. The successful musician must be energetic, persevering, industrious, must overcome fear, and resist allurements, must control himself under provocation; so also must the sailor, the motorman, the washerwoman, the nurse, the doctor, and the soldier.

This means that it is our chosen work that is the best moral teacher. Though we aim only to be efficient, to make a success of what we undertake, no matter what it is, we find that in the process we develop what

people call "virtues." This point seems to me so important as to need further illustration.

The Freshman who aspires to play football next autumn has no intention of being virtuous. What he wants is to get on the team, but if he succeeds it will be because he has or acquires a set of powers which are just those which his best friends would want him to have.

"If Jack would only put the same determination, the same perseverance, the same self-restraint and ambition into other things that he does into football, he would be perfect."

In this part of his life he is all that they want him to be, and it is there that he is happiest, least constrained, most expressed and on his mettle. The qualities he shows in football are as truly virtues as when they are displayed in war or engineering.

It is true that a boy may show great self-control in the way he plays football and none at all in the way he spends his money, just as the sailor may show great courage in a storm and none in resisting the temptation to drink. A politician is often very unselfish in making sacrifices for his children, but utterly selfish toward the citizens whom he defrauds by putting in as superintendent of streets a personal friend who is unfit. There are many people who show their good qualities only in a small fraction of their life, the part where their keen interest is aroused. Here they are fully alive and so are "good." When we study, as we do in ethics, the core of good action, we find it wherever anyone is doing his work well, whether he knows

it to be his duty and calls it so, or whether he only feels it to be worth doing. The laws of ethics are the principles which anyone must follow to attain success in any pursuit, and what are called virtues are the powers developed by and necessary to any efficient work.

It is worth noticing here that it is through activity and efficiency that goodness is reached, not through avoidance of actions that might possibly be dangerous or disturbing. It is impressed upon us from childhood up that being good is the same as keeping quiet, sitting still, not getting dirty, and avoiding breakage of china.

> "Do as you're told,
> Come when you're bid,
> Shut the door softly
> And you'll never be chid."

Now it is true that shutting the door softly and sitting still may at times and for some special reason be good acts, but in themselves they tend to stifle and dishearten the moral life which grows through activity. When the good characters in books are, like Owen Wister's Virginian, men of unquenchable purpose, the identification of good with *stupid,* and bad with *interesting* will lose its meaning. This fallacy still haunts many who are but half aware of it.

So far I have taken up only the large, far-reaching decisions as to one's work—decisions such as are made only a few times in one's life, but no matter how small or great the decision, ethics is always concerned with what to do and how to do it. Making a moral decision always means trying to think fearlessly,

sensibly, and sympathetically about whatever we propose to do.

At the opening of the Spanish War, Commodore Dewey was confronted with the question whether or not he should enter Manila Bay and bombard the city. The weight of great responsibility hung over him. He had time to think carefully, as he was bound to think, without flinching from the consequences and without self-deceit. What did he need to consider in order to make the best decision?

First of all he needed to reënforce in his memory the sense of his obligation—his contract to fulfil the duties of a commodore of the United States. Next he had to decide the question: Will it further the purpose for which I am here if I enter Manila Bay and bombard the city? What will be the gain to the United States in case of success and the loss in case of failure? He had to consider the danger, not as it affected himself or his friends, but as it concerned the effectiveness of his fleet and the prestige of his country. The decision to take all necessary risks for himself and his men was made long before; but he still needed to consider the fitness of his squadron for the task before it and to "size up" the whole situation. He needed, that is, to know all the relevant circumstances and the capacity of the group of men under his command.

The decision what to do once made, his next question was how to do it. "Shall the attack be made by night or by day? How shall I best avoid the torpedoes in the harbour? At what point is the weakest defence

of the city? Is it an advantage or an added danger to coöperate with the insurgent Filipinos?"

All pursuits have something in common, and the same principles are applicable to every one. A friend of mine, in doubt about his choice of a profession, visited many people who were following different lines of work—lawyers, doctors, business men, politicians, musicians—and asked of each: "What qualities do you need to succeed in your profession?" Much to his surprise, each answered in almost the same words: "You need energy, perseverance, resource, good judgment, interest in your work, concentration, imagination." This is what we have found out in thinking about different pursuits, and it is what makes the study of ethics, which deals with what is common to all aims, all work, all achievement, universally interesting and important.

III

If you are undertaking any work whatsoever, you are in so far interested in ethics. We can picture ethics as like a sun shooting out rays in every direction. If you are interested in anything, the rays from ethics hit you.

As it is only when you are a tramp without ties or aims that your citizenship becomes unreal, so it is only as you are a moral tramp with no stake in life anywhere that ethics cannot touch you. The tramp, as his name suggests, is always on the move, but yet going nowhere in particular. He will not settle down nor yet travel with any definite purpose. The moral tramp is out-

wardly respectable and usually covers less ground than his ragged brother of the road, but like all tramps he will not stick to anything, accumulate anything, or commit himself to anything. We may like or dislike him and he may like or dislike his beat; but duties he has none. He must first take a hand somewhere in the game of life; hold some property, get a job, marry, or become an anarchist. As soon as he commits himself in any of these ways he is bound by duties on every side.

Ethics is a real and living study only because it deals with the myriad interests of all who are taking a hand in the game of life, as citizenship is significant because it includes the myriad activities of all citizens. Wipe out all the pursuits and interests of its citizens and you have not the United States, but an absolute blank. So it is with ethics. Wipe out all the interests toward which ethics radiates, and ethics is nothing; it too is an absolute blank. This point is so important that we need to consider it carefully. Here is our country to which we owe everything. What should we be without it? Yet on the other hand without us, that is, without all the lives of its inhabitants, our country would be utterly meaningless. This does not mean that citizenship in the United States is but a name. No, it is the greatness of the country that it at the same time moulds and is moulded by the lives of all its citizens. So it is the strength, not the weakness, of ethics that, while concerned with all interests yet identical with none, it draws its life from the eager pursuits of which the world is full. Wherever a human being strikes a job,

there is ethical life, just as when the runner from a vine strikes the earth, there grows a root. Only those who are unrooted are outside of the grip of moral issues.

IV

It may easily seem that I am making ethics so central and all-pervasive a subject that it monopolises the world. The scientist may say: "You claim that ethics penetrates all human life, but science penetrates everything, human and non-human. Make room for science." The artist, too, and the lawyer finds material everywhere and will not be crowded out by ethics. There is no need that they should be. Ethics is one point of view from which to look at everything in the world, and science, art, and law are other points of view. The subject of marriage, for example, can be looked at from an ethical point of view. Ought any girl to marry a man who has consumption? It can be looked at from an artistic point of view, as, in the love scenes of Romeo and Juliet. It can be looked at from a scientific point of view, as it is when the statistics of marriage and divorce are stated impartially and without reference to right and wrong or to the happiness and tragedy involved. Marriage can be looked at from a legal point of view. The law decides at what age a girl can marry without her parents' consent, what are the rights of a woman to her husband's property, what degree of ill-treatment is ground for annulling a marriage.

Every subject may have these aspects and countless

others. I was once driving to a much-anticipated ball with a friend who, though also invited to the ball, had decided to go to a lecture which I thought very dull. As we drove along we had a hot discussion about the relative value and interest of these two ways of spending the evening. As I was getting out at the house where the ball was to take place, our driver asked a question which brought home to us with a wholesome shock the difference between our point of view and his: "Where did you say," he inquired with a jerk of his head toward my friend in the carriage, "the other freight was to be unloaded?"

Everything in the world may be considered on its physical side, its æsthetic side, its legal side, and in countless other aspects. We are interested here in considering everything from its ethical side.

## V

If we cut off from our present study these other points of view and turn our undivided attention toward ethics we find at the outset an important question. Can the study of ethics make us good or show us what we ought to do? Only indirectly. A doctor can tell a young man that the use of opium is ruining his health. He can make this vivid by describing what the effect on his brain and his character will be. As a result the man may give up taking opium, but the doctor cannot make him give it up. Nevertheless it is the duty of the doctor to open the patient's eyes; then, if he chooses to go on, it is with his eyes open.

Ethics is like the doctor. It cannot force anyone to be good, but it can make us recognise that, just as small doses of opium gradually kill the body, so selfishness, indolence, falsehood, are suicide of the spiritual nature.

It is important to realise, also, that ethics cannot touch us at all if we stand aloof from every aim and every interest. The great stream of active life, brimful of questions of right and wrong, flows along continually, but we may sit on the bank and refuse to enter; we may dabble our hands in it and draw them out and let the shining drops slip through our fingers. "If you take small doses of morphine every day you will gradually ruin your health and character," says the doctor. "Let them go," the infatuated man may answer. "If you want to go to college, you must study every evening." "I don't care whether I do or not," may be the baffling reply, baffling because the binding force of all these counsels depends on the word *if,* with which each begins, and *if* anyone denies his part in each and all of them, moral rules slip off him like water off a slanting roof. He is left to vegetate or become a brute as he will.

Ethics cannot help us against our will; it cannot help us when we have no will; neither can it tell us the particular steps we are to take. If you ask: "Does ethics show me what I ought to do?" the answer is again: "No." No book on ethics can tell you what you ought to do, because each life, and so the right choice in any life, is different from any that has been made before.

A girl is trying to decide whether she ought to go to college or not. No book on ethics can say that she

ought to go to college, nor can it go so far as to say that all girls ought to go to college. She may be in duty bound to stay at home and take care of her blind father, and if it would be wrong for her to go, then it cannot be true that all girls should go, nor even that all girls who can afford it should go. It is the whole significance and joy of our lives that each one is different and each decision new, like the first step in a field of unbroken snow. Ethics cannot direct the steps because no book or theory can anticipate our advance into the untrodden future.

I said that ethics is the study of what to do and how to do it. I need to add at once that it gives the principles or general rules for any act and never the particular decision. We all follow the same principles when we carry out any plan, but we apply them differently.

A glance at various careers will make this clearer. We have already seen that if you want to succeed in golf, medicine, society, or anything else you must know your subject thoroughly, know your own capacities, and apply steadily all your powers. The particular rule, however, is different in each case. The golfer says: Keep your eye on the ball. The doctor says: Keep your eye on the patient's lips. The politician says: Keep your eye on the State of New York. The music teacher says: Keep your eye on the notes.

Ethics is concerned with what is called for in all these different directions, and that is among other things, attention, concentration, intentness. If you are going to do anything well you must look sharp. That

is a universal rule of successful action, and so it is a law of ethics. The particular choice is unique, however, your own and not another's, and so there can be no specific rule.

Let us turn to the positive side. We already have had glimpses of what it is that ethics can do for us; it is time to see more fully. Ethics helps us by giving us principles of action as tools for clearing away underbrush. Living is always making our way through an unexplored country, sometimes with dense woods to penetrate, sometimes with rushing rivers to navigate, and sometimes with open green fields where we are tempted to linger. The help ethics can give is very much like the help of having an axe with us on such a journey. The axe does not cut until we swing it, nor unless we keep it sharp; nor does the axe decide for us what to cut. There are times when we hardly use it because our way is clear, but any day we may meet difficulties in which we should be utterly baffled without it. Many a moral question is as baffling and tangled as dense underbrush, and even where the decision is not in itself important it is often puzzling.

My father and mother are away for a week when I wake up one morning with an uncomfortable cold. Ought I to go to school or not? Of course, my mother would not want me to make my cold worse, nor, on the other hand, to miss school unnecessarily. At this stage of the question we have a deadlock. Either decision seems wrong. The first way in which the study of ethics would help me is to suggest that I must know the circumstances and my own nature better. How

bad is my cold? Am I feverish? Am I naturally strong? Have I had similar colds which were not increased by going out? Is the schoolroom likely to be close or hot?

If I dislike school, I am liable to find myself saying, "I may be feverish, and I might make my cold worse by going to school. Mamma would never want me to do that, and besides there is an examination in algebra to-day and if I go to-morrow I shall not have to take it."

Ethics clears up this tangle in three ways. It helps us to see which facts are really relevant; it helps us to clear away self-deceit; and it helps us to put in order our reasons, *pro* and *con,* so that instead of a jumble of mixed ideas we have a number of clear arguments on each side and can weigh and balance fairly. It is true that I have a cold, but I am naturally strong; I take my temperature and find I am not feverish; the sky is grey, but it hardly looks like a bad storm, and as for the examination, that has absolutely nothing to do with the question. It ought not to have the slightest weight. On the whole it is fairly clear that I ought to go, and if my cold is made worse I will take that into account another time.

This last sentence suggests still further the help that careful thought about moral questions gives. It teaches us to glean from our past and from the past of others help that prevents our stumbling over recurring decisions or repeating old blunders. What should we think of a captain who went to sea in a ship whose seaworthiness he had never investigated. Yet our

lives with their critical moral decisions are far more important than any boat, and we are the sole commanders in them. We know it is blameworthy and foolhardy to sign papers whose contents we have not read. Is it not far more blameworthy and foolhardy to take upon ourselves the responsibilities of marriage or of the choice of a profession without all the foresight we can gain?

A general of long experience can look over a bewildering battle scene, see what is happening, and give the command for the best thing to be done. The smoke, the deafening noise, the masses of wounded, the scattered troops whose colours are so blurred that it is hard to tell friend from foe, are still there for him as for you; but he has learned to see the important and put aside the irrelevant. He has a plan of battle which gives him a clue to guide his decision, he knows the principles of attack, he has gathered up the experience of other generals and of other battles. So in moral life if we are to be ready for experience we must learn to make our plan of battle and to formulate our principles of attack through study, through practice, and through watching the career of others among us or before us on the field.

The student of ethics has a rich mine of past experience in which to dig. History shows certain recurring types of moral puzzles into which people fall again and again and which by hook or crook they finally conquer. We aim to anticipate these perils and, before the crisis comes, to avail ourselves of the experiences of the past in tackling these problems and facing them with sys-

tem and deliberation instead of with the desperate courage born of necessity. We aim to pull the future into the present and so live more intensely and less at haphazard.

We cannot take our morality on trust any more than our politics or religion; neither need we act as if no one had ever had such problems before, nor wait till the moment of temptation before we think out our principles. Sophistry or conventionalism is the result of not anticipating moral problems. Unless we think out our principles we are swayed by the sophistry of momentary desires, or we give up reasoning and accept old answers unquestioned.

A boatman who canoes down a river frequently meets the problem of the eddy at corners. It has confronted thousands and upset hundreds. Similarly in ethics, there are certain whirlpools that come sooner or later in almost every life. They should be anticipated and their problems thought out. You may find a better solution than any hitherto discovered. Ethics does not prejudge the way of meeting the eddy. It suggests how the eddy has been and may be met, and stimulates you to realise the difficulty and to make an effort to find an ideal solution. Ethics is this systematic effort to anticipate and solve recurrent problems and to light up the new problems by fire kindled in the flame of past victories.

## CHAPTER II

## BOUNDARIES

### I

When a person buys a large piece of land, the first thing he does is to find out its boundaries. Otherwise he might waste time and get into trouble by cutting down trees or cultivating fields which did not belong to him. This is what we need to do before we go farther in the consideration of ethics. As I have said already, ethics is the study of right-choosing and well-doing, and anyone who is carrying out any plan whatsoever is concerned with it. But we need to make more definite the boundary lines between what is in the field of ethics, that is of moral life, and what is beyond it. Huxley's desire for a perfectly arranged clockwork life brings us at once in view of the whole question of moral responsibility: "I protest [he writes] that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning, I would instantly close with the offer."[1]

Why is such a proposition utterly repugnant to us in spite of the freedom from sin, failure, doubt and effort which by Huxley's conditions are to go with the accept-

[1] T. H. Huxley, "Lay Sermons," p. 340.

ance of a clockwork life? We say that it is uninteresting, monotonous, dreary, that it would make people all alike, that it is too easy and leaves nothing to strive for; but underlying all these answers is the deeper one that compulsion to do the right act wipes out the whole moral life which is the life of choice. We should not be ourselves if we were made to do right, we say, and this is true, because if we did the right mechanically we should lose the most characteristic part of our life as human beings, which is the power to choose what to do and how to do it.

This realisation, that in spite of all the suffering, the disgrace, the struggle involved, we would rather be moral beings than perfect machines, is far-reaching in its significance. It takes away the bitterness even of sorrow, evil, and shame, because we recognise that they are a part of the life of morality, with all its eager outlook and all its possibility of growth. It is better to rise over difficulties than to have them smoothed away, better to resist evil and even to fail and be disgraced than to live in the choiceless innocence of a violet or a crystal.

Our reaction against Huxley's suggestion shows us that moral life is the life of choice. The non-responsible or machine-like life is beyond our control. It may be absolutely beneficent in its results or it may be destructive of all that is good, but if beyond our control it is non-moral. A sleep-walker may go down stairs with a candle and set the curtains on fire, and the house may burn down. Her action is disastrous, but it is not sinful. She may, on the other

hand, put out a fire in her sleep, but though useful, her deed is not praiseworthy.

Moral life is voluntary, within our control, and we may choose half-heartedly, wilfully, carelessly, narrowly. Moral life, therefore, includes sin as well as virtue. The sleep-walker is at the time neither good nor sinful, but anyone who is morally responsible is free either to do right or to sin.

When Pat, the office boy, is accused of doing wrong and feels that he is not guilty, he may assert this in various ways. He may say: I was not myself when I did it; I was fast asleep; I was so absorbed that I forgot that you had forbidden it; I did not know it could do any harm; Charlie made me do it; I did it before I had time to think, or I was so frightened I could not help it.

Here are six different excuses: unconsciousness, absorption, ignorance, force, suddenness of impulse, fear. In each of them the appeal is made: "I was unable to choose, I had no control." Assuming that Pat is accurate in his statements, we can be sure that he is not responsible for the wrongdoing of which he has been accused. We are sure of this, because in the first three cases Pat was unconscious of his act or its consequences, while in the last three it was beyond his control, that is, involuntary. We can say then that an irresponsible act is one which is either unconscious or involuntary.

I once knew a gentle and devoted servant who became insane and believed it her duty to murder a man whom she called James Dolan because he was about to

cause war between America and England. She was *possessed* by the idea, as we say; it controlled her instead of her controlling it; and no matter how tragic the result of her act might have been, we should not call it sinful, because it was forced by an overmastering impulse.

II

This example of the non-moral is evident enough. The cases, however, in which people are not responsible shade off into cases where they might have done or known better. The non-moral shades into the moral as violet shades into blue in the rainbow, and though it is easy to mark off the violet of the rainbow from the red, as distinct and even sharply opposed in colour, it is very difficult to see just where the changes come. Many cases are "on the line," as we say in tennis, and we have got to get close and look very carefully before we can judge whether they are to be classified as responsible or not.

The sleep-walker is not responsible for her deed, when she is wholly unconscious, but how shall we judge a case of entire oblivion, like that of Maggie Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss," who caused the death of her brother's rabbits by forgetting to feed them? She was unconscious that she had forgotten the rabbits till too late to save them; she would not have neglected them if she had thought of it, but the question is, could she have helped forgetting? To answer this we need to study Maggie's character.

Mrs. Tulliver gives us a description of Maggie that

brings out vividly her dreamy temperament. "You talk of cuteness, Mr. Tulliver, but I'm sure the child's half an idiot in some things, for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, and perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs. That never run i' my family, thank God, no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face of Providence, but it seems hard as I should have but one gell and her so comical. There's Lucy Deane, she's such a good child you may set her on a stool and there she'll sit for an hour together and never offer to get off." [2]

This dreaminess seems to have lain so deep in Maggie's nature that it really overwhelmed her remembrance. She loved Tom intensely; she meant to remember the rabbits, but it all went out of her head. She was at the time non-responsible.

Nor is such power of absorption wholly undesirable. When a girl becomes so absorbed in her music that she forgets a Latin lesson we have a somewhat similar result from a different cause. We all need to be concentrated in our work; without concentration no first-rate work is done. Could this girl be at once deeply engrossed in her music and yet free enough to be aware when an hour had passed? We all know the type of practising in which the clock is consulted every few minutes that the proper limit may not be missed. We know, too, how slight is the gain

[2] George Eliot, "The Mill on the Floss."

in musical ability which comes from such half-hearted work and how incapable of steady work the player soon becomes. "When you are practising you ought not to think of anything except your music," the teacher often says. If the girl followed this advice literally, and was wholly absorbed in reading the piano score of Lohengrin, she may have been in so deep a reverie at the time when she ought to have left the music and turned to the Latin lesson that she never once thought of the hour. Although her eyes are open, she is to all intents and purposes asleep, and no more responsible at the time than the sleep-walker. *At the time,* that is the central point. Unless it had never happened before, she was responsible for not remembering how easily she became absorbed in music and for not preparing for this, either by learning her lesson first or by asking someone to call her when the hour was over.

III

We are always responsible for preparing to become non-responsible. Even the sleep-walker, if she knew that she was in the habit of walking in her sleep, and was likely to do dangerous things, was responsible for not locking herself into her room and putting the matches where she could not reach them. In the same way Maggie Tulliver was responsible for promising impulsively to feed the rabbits, when a little thought would have recalled to her the probability of her forgetting all about it unless she asked someone to remind her of it. Yet Maggie Tulliver learned in her reveries

much that Lucy Deane was never capable of knowing, and it is important to remember that it may be our highest, equally with our lowest, experiences which take us out of the moral sphere.

It is often our duty to anticipate a period of irresponsibility. In Anne Gilchrist's "Life of Mary Lamb" there is a touching account of her periodic insanity. She felt the attacks coming on, and knew that she was going to become irresponsible. She knew she might kill her brother, as she had killed her mother. "Then would Mary as gently as possible prepare her brother for the duty he must perform. . . . On one occasion Mr. Charles Lloyd met them slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both weeping bitterly, and found on joining them that they were taking their solemn way to the accustomed asylum." [3]

This is a case of noble moral preparation for a non-moral state. In little ways the need of such preparation comes up every day. If, while I am asleep some night, the sparks of my wood-fire fly out and burn the rug, I cannot say as an unanswerable excuse: "Oh, it wasn't my fault; I couldn't help it. I was fast asleep." I knew that I was about to go to sleep, that is, to get into an irresponsible or non-moral condition, and I ought to have prepared for it by covering the fire so thoroughly with ashes that the sparks could not fly out.

Nearly as common as unconscious acts are acts done through ignorance; here, in judging moral respon-

[3] Mary Lamb, by Anne Gilchrist, p. 97.

sibility, we have always to ask whether the ignorance was unavoidable. Many accidents are caused by culpable ignorance. The phrase, "I did not know it was loaded," is almost proverbial as a lame excuse for carelessness.

Yet acts which look apparently blameworthy shade imperceptibly into those that are non-moral. A boy is firing off cannon-crackers on the Fourth of July, and having experienced the joyful noise caused by the explosion of a small cracker under a tin can, he puts a cannon-cracker under the can and gets his brother to hold the can down with his foot. The result is a bad injury. Is the first boy responsible? The answer depends wholly on the decision whether he could have foreseen the disastrous effect of the large cracker. If not, he was not responsible.

We reach here this general conclusion: No one who is practically or actually asleep, in any way not himself, or necessarily ignorant of what the consequences of his act may be, is responsible for his acts, good or bad. He is responsible for making any preparation he might have made before he lost his control, or, in the case of ignorance, for thinking before he acted.

I have taken up so far cases on the border-line between consciousness and unconsciousness, and shown that when we are unconscious, as in sleep, deep absorption, or any other cause, we are at the time non-moral beings. I come now to a different type of non-responsibility, that brought about by suddenness of temptation. Take, for example, the case of a man of violent temper, who is so fired by a stinging insult

that he instantly stabs his companion with a knife. If we ask him why he did it, he replies that he could not help it. His hand struck the blow before he could control it. If this was true, if the act was as uncontrollable as winking when we are hit, we can be sure that he was at the moment non-moral, unanswerable for the act his hand did. He was not himself at the time; he was like an engine with no engineer to regulate its speed. To be capable of morality you must be yourself. But if, as is highly probable, he had lost his temper at other times, and acted in ways he afterwards regretted, he was responsible for letting himself become irresponsible.

To judge whether he was *sinful*, we should need to know what his inheritance and early training were, whether he could have rightly avoided the encounter which aroused his passion, and whether he could have dominated his anger in the early stages when it was only rumbling within him. But to know whether he was or was not *responsible* for this act we need only to know whether even an instant's glimmer of an alternative action came to him, or whether, on the contrary, the act of striking was as automatic as that of a clock when the hour and minute hands meet at twelve.

Similar to temper, in its sudden and often irresistible power, is the influence of fear. An official is sent by the government to the Yosemite with a large sum of money to pay the salaries of the soldiers stationed there to protect the forests from fire. As the coach rounds a corner two masked highwaymen spring from behind the rocks and shout: "Hands up!" Up

go all hands automatically: "As if," the driver said afterward, "you'd done nothing else all your life." The official messenger is covered by a pistol and robbed with the rest of the passengers.

The question whether he was morally responsible rests wholly on the decision whether he had enough control of himself at the time to choose any alternative act. He may have lost his head completely; his masterless body may have followed an irresistible impulse of self-protection. To throw up his hands was probably an unconscious act; and whether it was wise or foolish, it was in this case outside the sphere of morals. During the minutes that succeeded this act, while the passengers were being robbed of their money and watches, the official, unless wholly unnerved, must have had time to think and he thereby became responsible for his next act, whether of submission or of resistance. While not responsible for throwing up his hands, he was in all probability responsible for the decision whether it was wise or foolish to take them *down*.

In this case, as in the others we have discussed, though the moment's surprise may have swept away all self-control, the preparation for such an event may have been clearly his duty. At some point or other in the man's life there probably was an opportunity for thought on the risk of and the preparation needed for this work. Without opportunity for thought, either at the time or beforehand, there is no moral responsibility.

IV

The two cases last considered were those in which dominant impulses of anger and fear apparently forced men to act contrary to what they really believed best. We take up next a more subtle case. As Dante passes through the lowest circle of Paradise he sees the Empress Constance, whom he has often heard of as saintly in her conduct, but snatched by a cruel compulsion away from her convent and forced to marry and live in the world. Dante, in great surprise, inquires of Beatrice why such a holy and innocent person should not be in the highest circle of Paradise. Beatrice answers: "Though there be violence when he who suffers nowise consents to him who compels, these souls were not by reason of that excused. For will unless it *wills* is not quenched, but does as nature does in fire, though violence a thousand times may wrest it. Wherefore, if it bends little or much it follows the force and thus these did, having power to return to the holy place." [4]

Constance is not responsible for her *act*. She is responsible for letting her will, which (as Dante believes) was within her control, yield itself to what to her was less noble than the life of her convent.

Here we reach an important distinction. Moral responsibility means the opportunity for thought, and the facing of alternatives. Where that is present we are responsible because we are capable of *desiring* a right or wrong act, even though it may be physically impossible for us to carry out either course. When

[4] "Paradise," Canto IV. lines 73-81, Norton's translation.

a stronger comrade seizes a younger boy and prevents him from going home, the small boy is still responsible for wishing to stay out or to go home. Physical force cannot control his vision of the right and wrong alternative. It is only if the younger boy has no glimmer of an alternative that we can call him non-responsible. So Constance was within and not outside the sphere of morality.

The apothecary in "Romeo and Juliet" [5] who, while selling the poison to Romeo, maintained that his poverty and not his will gave consent, is still more evidently within the sphere of responsibility. We know it, not only in spite of his asseveration: "My poverty, but not my will consents," but largely because of it. Shakspere's wonderful description of his poverty prepares us to face the question whether his hunger drove him beyond the power of self-control.

> "I do remember an apothecary,
> And hereabouts he dwells, whom late I noted,
> In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,
> Culling of simples,—meagre were his looks,
> Sharp misery had worn him to the bones."

It seems at first as if such hunger and misery might well have made him irresponsible, yet in this case I think there is no doubt of his moral responsibility. We know this because: He was neither asleep, unconscious, nor insane; he clearly knew the law, and the effect of poison; no physical force nor intimidation were used; he had time to think; by his own statement he recognised a possible choice.

[5] Act V. scene 1.

Non-moral acts are those due to unconsciousness or to ignorance. They are automatic and without choice. The act of the apothecary was deliberate and free; hence, whether or no it was right or wrong, it was certainly his own act, and not compelled, as he claimed it to be.

Through the study of many cases we have now reached a clear definition of moral action. Such deeds must be deliberate, the acts of one who is awake and knows what he is doing, and they must be voluntary, that is, the actor must have at least the glimmer of an alternative choice.

## V

It is at first startling to realise that every one of us ceases to be responsible during at least one-third of his entire life. In sleep we drop all responsibility and become for the time as passive as lumps of clay. And even during the hours when we call ourselves awake, a large proportion of what we do is a matter of pure habit and not within our control. Many of our habits are so ingrained that we are unaware of them. They are like the rhythmic swing of the right foot with the left arm in walking, so deep-rooted by repetition that change is almost impossible.

Every one of us has acquired rigid habits; everyone sleeps a large proportion of his life, spends more or less time in reverie, gets so absorbed in music or worship, in reading or the theatre, that he forgets everything else. We let ourselves become almost like plants, alive but totally unconscious and non-moral. Can this be

right? Surely, when it is done for the sake of greater power in active life. Without sleep we should soon become nervous wrecks, battered and unseaworthy. There is for all of us a corresponding need of regular habits. It is the steadying power of regular hours of rising and eating, work and recreation, the complete surrender of thought about trifles, that alone makes advance possible. The pianist who has to think about each note cannot play with freedom; his fingers must work automatically before his attention can be free to receive and express the meaning of the music he is playing. If we were aware of every mouthful we ate, or chose freshly each night the hour of going to bed, our attention would be so engrossed by details that all our important work would be badly done or neglected. It is only by choosing for a part of our time, and in many of our acts to be non-moral, that we can accomplish anything. It is then right to become irresponsible in every instance where by so doing we gain on the whole in the power of fulfilling our purposes; if we lose on the whole, it is wrong.

There is some risk in this. It is a part of every moral life to take risks. The risk of our doing mischief while unconscious is usually not enough to balance the gain of sleep. If, however, I am driving an engine, it is immoral to let myself go to sleep, because the risk is too great. We take risks, for the sake of greater gain: in meditation which may only unfit us for work but ought to strengthen us with new insight; in worship, which may leave us

overwrought and nervous, but should give us new vigour and impulse.

Reverie, too, though a risk, is necessary to the finest moral life, necessary that purposes may not crowd, push and wear out their owner, but be brought into a single whole.

"We are too busy, too encumbered, too much occupied, too active. We must know how to put our occupation aside; which does not mean that we must be idle. In inaction which is meditative and attentive the wrinkles of the soul are smoothed away, and the soul itself spreads, unfolds and springs afresh, and, like the trodden grass of the roadside or the bruised leaf of a plant, repairs its injuries, becomes new, spontaneous, true and original. Reverie, like the rain of night, restores colour and force to thoughts which have been blanched and wearied by the heat of the day. With gentle fertilising power it awakens within us a thousand sleeping germs, and gathers round us materials for the future and images for the use of talents. Reverie is the Sunday of thought, and who knows which is the more important and fruitful for man, the laborious tension of the week or the life-giving repose of the Sabbath? It is like a bath which gives vigour and suppleness to the whole being, to the mind as well as to the body." [6]

There are then tracts of life wherein we are non-moral or non-responsible, but as long as this state is chosen because by so doing we can, on the whole, best fulfil our purposes, it is not wrong, but right.

[6] Amiel, "Journal Intime," Translated by Mrs. Humphry Ward, vol. i., p. 43.

# CHAPTER III

## THE POWER OF PURPOSE

### I

In the last chapter we found that all who are unconscious of what they are doing and all who are acting involuntarily, that is, without any alternative before them, are not responsible for their actions, and so are excluded from the moral realm. We saw that if Professor Huxley's wish for a character incapable of wrongdoing had been granted, his choice of such a character would have been his last moral act. With its fulfilment the whole field of responsible life would have been wiped out as the tide levels the castles we build upon the sand. Moral life is that part of our existence in which we are answerable, in which we choose.

If a bricklayer, through no carelessness of his own, drops a hod of bricks from the roof and kills a man who is passing below, we say that he is not responsible, because his act was involuntary. He could not help it, he was unconscious of the danger, he did not mean to hurt anyone, he did not do it on purpose. The common expression: "I did it on purpose," is an accurate one. The moral life is the life wherein we carry out our purposes. Since this is so, it becomes important to know just what we mean by a purpose.

I will take up first the difference between a purpose and a fact. It is certainly different to say: "I am on the way to New York" and to say "I am planning to go to New York during the Christmas vacation." Evidently there is a kind of desire or hunger in the purpose that is not in the fact. The fact is, as it were, settled back comfortably in its chair, the purpose leans forward eagerly. The fact rests in the present, the purpose stretches into the future. The fact is at one with itself, the purpose is never at one with itself: it yearns toward what is not itself. A purpose, then, as contrasted with a fact, has desire in it.

There is the same sort of contrast between a purpose and a day-dream. As we dream before the fire we are placid, content. We build with busy fingers our castles in the air. It is easy and delightful; but when dinner-time comes we wake to find not only that our castles have crumbled, but that their building has filled the hours we had planned for work. The difference between a dream and a purpose is that the former is passive and the latter active. The dreamer is content, the planner hungry for attainment.

Wishes are hungry, too. "How I wish I were going to New York; I want to go dreadfully." There seems to be plenty of desire in the wish, but we begin to doubt its genuineness when we ask: "Well, have you taken any steps toward going?" and are answered. "No, but I wish someone would pay my expenses." "Can't you earn or save the money?" "Well, I suppose I might, if I gave up going to the opera, but I don't

want to do that." The difference between a wish and a purpose seems to be this: When we purpose, we take the means to our end; when we wish, we wait for the end to come our way. Wishes often grow into purposes, but as long as they are nothing but wishes they remain inactive. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." Mr. C. P. Huntington, who died lately and left many millions, started without a cent in the world and won it all by his energy and intelligence. Here is a beggar who *did* ride, but it was because his wish was also a purpose. I do not admire his business standards, but I do admire his energy.

The difference between a purpose and an impulse is that a purpose has thought in it. "Why did you go out skating?" "Oh, Helen was going, and I went along, too." She simply followed like a sheep who takes the same path as the rest of the flock. "Why did you go out skating?" I ask of another girl. "Because I've made up my mind that I am going to learn the outer roll before the winter is over."

"Made up my mind": we use this expression often, but we do not usually realise all that it means. A person who has not made up his mind is in a queer state. "I can't decide whether to go out to walk or to stay in the house." Now a little tug pulls me toward the door. "It doesn't seem to be raining much, I guess I'll go." Then another little tug comes in the other direction. "That new novel looks so interesting, I believe I won't go out. But then I always feel soggy and stupid if I don't," so I am tugged toward the door again. "Oh! it's raining harder now and my hat is

trimmed with velvet." This state is close to that of my being two persons and so morally irresponsible. When on the contrary you have a clear purpose, you make up your mind what to do, quickly or slowly, according to the difficulty of the case, but once for all. "I have an engagement to give a music lesson at 3 o'clock. It is 2.35 now; of course I must go at once."

The difference between a person who has a purpose and whose mind is therefore made up, and one who is dreaming or vacillating, is so great that we can see it in the very way each walks down the street. The woman who has a definite aim walks straight and steadily; the one without an aim saunters, hesitates at corners and is lured by every shop window. Without an aim she has no rudder and therefore drifts about on the line of least resistance.

By distinguishing purposes from facts, dreams, wishes, impulses and fancies, we learn this about the nature of a purpose. A purpose, to be a purpose truly, must have thought, foresight and will. A purpose is more and more distinguished from a whim or a dream in proportion as it is clearly chosen and persistently held.

II

There are a good many people who are moved by any impulse and have no steady purpose, nothing with which they are identified. Two girls of fifteen come to pass a fortnight with their aunt at the seashore. One plans from the start that she will learn

to swim well before the end of that visit. She sets out each day and without wasting any time or energy in jumping about and splashing the water over her friends, she devotes herself to getting the stroke and forces herself to cut loose as soon as possible from supports and to become confident in the water. The other girl has no aim. When she goes down town the candy shops attract her, and every girl who drops in to call can make her change her occupation. She picks up a magazine article, but does not find it worth finishing. She is excited for half an hour over the plan of getting up a play, but finds it too much trouble to learn her part, and abandons it. At the end of the fortnight, the first girl has become a good swimmer, the second has become thoroughly bored. She has sipped the cream off everything and is satiated but not nourished. This girl is for the time almost outside of morality. It is impossible to help her until she herself will take hold of some purpose and stick to it. Like an aimless June bug who is never still, she wearies herself and all those around her. Such a girl is hardly to be called sinful, because she has no purpose to which to be loyal; she is far more like a cork tossed about by the waves. We cannot really tell whether she is either good or bad until we know whether she could hold to a purpose if she had one.

Tennyson, in "The Lotus Eaters," pictures some sailors who have reached an enchanted island and eaten of the lotus which brings forgetfulness. Every aim is slipping away from them; even the thought of

their wives and children far away at home is dim and unreal.

> "They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
> Between the sun and moon upon the shore,
> And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
> Of child and wife and slave, but evermore
> Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
> Weary the wandering fields of barren foam,
> Then someone said: 'We will return no more,'
> And all at once they sang: 'Our Island home
> Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'"

They seem to be acting in a dastardly way and to be neglecting every duty for the bliss of dreaming on this lovely island, and yet we cannot call them good or bad because they have no purpose. They were responsible for eating of the Lotus if they knew it would bring forgetfulness, but once its subtle influence has taken possession of them, they drift over the border that divides the moral from the irresponsible. The moral life is the life of purpose and no one with a purpose can drift along in the Lotus Eaters' peace.

III

If we have a purpose it means that we want to do something and so to make something different from what it now is. I have set my heart on having a watch which costs fifty dollars. It is not simply a wish on my part, it is a definite purpose. Such a purpose immediately begins to affect both what I do and what I refuse to do. If I am to get a watch and if I

have no way of borrowing the money, I must earn it. If I am going to earn money I must become capable of doing well something that is needed, and I must put aside all that will interfere with my making and saving the money till I have enough for my purpose. I decide to learn wood-carving well enough to earn fifty dollars by selling picture frames. I must work at it every afternoon and refuse all invitations and allurements. I am not going to spend any of my earnings until my end is attained. Theatres and magazines are good things in themselves, but they have become wrong for me because I have identified myself with a person who is earning a watch. As soon as I have undertaken my purpose some acts become wrong and others right for me. This is a very important point. It is only through relation to a purpose great or small that acts become either right or wrong. Any purpose at once classifies acts and separates the sheep from the goats.

The moral life takes hold of us as soon as we begin to aim at any end which we think worth while. Our first impression may be that we have no purpose at all. "Why, I haven't any special end in life," one says, or again, "My purpose is only to make my father give me the cash to go to the Newport tournament."

To one his purpose seems too indefinite and unanalysed, to the other, too concrete and small to be either moral or immoral. Nevertheless, all purposes are included in the moral realm, from the vague purpose of "doing good" to the concrete purpose of playing marbles; and by looking more attentively

than we usually do, we shall recognise purposes in ourselves. If you have no end in life, why are you living? The very fact of your living on suggests purpose. The fact of your getting up and dressing in the morning, unless it is pure habit or has no plan at all in it, shows that you are alive and responsible. If you have no purpose in life, why not lie still in bed? Because it is lazy, because I have to take a music lesson, because I want to go skating. In each of these cases you have a plan, and it is this which prevents you from lying still like a log, or getting up merely from habit.

You are planning to persuade your family to go to Newport at the time of the tennis tournament. This does not seem to be an important purpose, but it comes under the same head as every other chosen act, and can be judged as right or wrong. It is not the kind of purpose, but the fact that one has any purpose whatsoever that is the password to the moral sphere. Even if a person says, "I hate responsibility; I'm going to be just as irresponsible as I can," he becomes morally responsible through *that* purpose; for to resist all impulses toward steady work and to devote oneself to being an animal, is to carry out a difficult project and so to be subject to moral laws. No one can carry out a steady plan of being non-responsible, because he is constantly responsible for that plan and deliberately to choose and cling to a machine-like existence requires great activity, persistency and resolution.

IV

No matter how trivial our plan may be, it is something with which Ethics is concerned. Spencer [1] says that morality is not at all concerned with such choice as whether we take our pleasure walk by the waterfall or along the seashore. He is not thinking of people too absorbed to be conscious of choice. He holds that there are many chosen acts which are yet perfectly indifferent. The pedestrian who says: "Shall I go by the waterfall or ramble along the seashore" is not unconscious, lost in reverie, or unaware of any alternative. He can choose. Still, Spencer says, even when we are wide-awake, entirely ourselves, deliberately asking questions, there are many choices with which morality has no concern.

With this view I differ. Morality, I maintain, is concerned with every choice we make, although of course many are unimportant, like the subordinate yet essential details of any work of art. In a great novel or picture, there are many parts which are more prominent than others; the hero and heroine have to be described far more elaborately than the waiter or the distant cousin. But though the novelist will not dwell on these minor characters, we know that anything which comes into his scheme must be appropriately done. So it is with the rest of life. Ethics is concerned with every chosen act, but some are rightly much more prominent in consciousness than others. It is perfectly true that the choice between going by the waterfall or rambling

[1] "Data of Ethics," chapter i, section 2.

along the seashore is usually unimportant, but it is the myriad small decisions which disintegrate or strengthen character, just as it is "the thousand nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love," [2] which make up a good man's life.

If we go back to what Spencer says we shall see why it sounds true, but is misleading. "Stirring the fire or opening the window," he says, "are (as currently conceived) acts with which morality has no concern." This is true when such acts are done unconsciously or without purpose, but not when chosen. We recognise this as soon as we come to a real case, a case in which we are told more of the circumstances. As you lie before the camp fire on a bitter cold night, very sleepy, but knowing that your companions are shivering, is it not a moral act to get up and stir the fire? Or if by opening the window, overheated as you are, you are likely to catch a violent cold, is not that an immoral act? Every chosen act of anyone whose life is guided by its purpose is either right or wrong.

Take one of the other cases of which Spencer speaks, "Reading the newspaper," he says, "is an act with which morality, as currently conceived, has no concern." How untrue this statement is when we examine it! Reading the newspaper may be right or it may be wrong, and it may be of little or of vast importance. For instance, we read the newspapers to get the information necessary to vote intelligently for the next President of the United States. Almost

[2] Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey."

all the information of the average man about politics comes from the newspapers, and if nobody in the country read them, voting would be a farce.

On the other hand, to read a newspaper may be absolutely sinful. Suppose I am left in charge of a baby near the edge of a pond. In my newspaper there is a fascinating article on Salvini's acting and I am tempted to neglect the baby in order to read it. This is clearly not an indifferent act.

The difficulty in Spencer's position seems to be that he speaks of acts like opening a window, or reading a newspaper, as if they might be wholly severed from the rest of the actor's life. Taken out of their setting in this way they are non-moral because they are as meaningless as a single word cut out of a letter. But in reality a chosen act never is without some setting of purpose, and as soon as we are told what the purpose is, we see that the act is, like all acts of choice, right or wrong.

There is, then, no conscious choice with which morality is unconcerned; though some choices should be made swiftly, and without hard thought, while others need long pondering and keen search for light on the situation. I ought usually to think little about the direction of my afternoon walk, and long and hard about my choice of a profession, but both decisions are moral whenever they are not purely impulsive. It is obviously wrong to think long on unimportant subjects or briefly on important ones. But what does "important" mean? It means *closely related to your purpose.*

v

To have a plan, to be about something, is then the distinguishing mark of the moral realm, and also the most characteristic trait of humanity. Man is an animal who makes and carries out plans. Other animals seem not to look so far beyond the present moment. "Man looks before and after," and so aims at a new cotton-gin, a new symphony, a new kingdom, while animals build their nests, seek their food and reproduce their species practically unchanged from century to century.

If you see a starving cat standing before a bowl of milk, there is certainty as to the result, but if you see a man with a glass of water presented to his parching lips, you cannot predict the result without knowing him through and through. If he is a David, he may pour it on the ground as an offering to the Lord; if he is a Sir Philip Sidney, he may give it to the dying soldier by his side. We see here strikingly how such men as David or Sidney are factors in their own destiny because they can convert their impulse from a blind impelling force into an intended end. They make up their mind about it, make it theirs instead of being subservient to it; and this means that they take their impulsive desire out of its isolation and bring it into connection with the rest of their life. Just this difference makes the capacity for a moral or an immoral life. The cat, if she is thirsty, drinks. No alternative seems present to her, but in a man, though just as thirsty, other impulses, other plans, other interests

come into play. He draws in other moments of his life, other ideals of himself, to compete with and withstand this domineering craving. Deeper than his parching thirst is his love of his neighbour; he will not drink the water and see another die of thirst. The impulsive craving for something to satisfy his thirst, if it were his only want, would compel him to drink, but it is not alone, as it would be in an animal. He can think about his neighbour's thirst. It is thought that holds his different desires together, and makes him see what is most important. For thought draws his impulses in out of anarchy, out of chaos, and makes them his own, the act of the whole person.

All the richness and nobility of human life, all man's heroism and genius are made possible by this fundamental tendency to gather up the past and the distant; to shape it into a plan and this plan into a new act. This is the power of purpose which makes man capable of freedom and of progress.

This power to make a plan is far-reaching in its effects. Man grows with cumulative swiftness. Because a cat acts necessarily on impulse, her wants and the range of her activities never grow. A year hence you will find her seeking the same ends that she seeks now. We talk about the ingenuity with which birds build their nests. Birds' nests look ingenious and complicated; but each generation of birds builds its nest in practically the same way, no matter how exposed to danger it is, for birds learn little by experience. If man built birds' nests, he would long ago have had umbrella tops, wire doors and gratings for protection

against grey squirrels and cats. He would have added heaters and made provision for cleanliness.

The difference between acting on impulse or instinct and acting from a purpose, is that impulses alone never enlarge the want, and purposes, carried out, always do. The cat, when she is hungry, snatches at the proffered food, and under like conditions always will, but to think about an impulse for food, means to control the unreasoned and momentary tendency to seize it. It means to think not only of that moment's impulse, but of other moments, and, as we grow more and more conscious, to think not only of moments, but of a whole lifetime; not only of our own life, but of our family or our country. What seems but a slight distinction, becomes an all-important one. The cat feels hungry and eats. The man feels hungry, realises the necessity of the future supply of food, ploughs, sows seed and gathers into barns; sends carloads of grain from West to East and over the sea and establishes commerce. The cat looks to the moment; man looks before and after, shapes his destiny and becomes capable of endless growth.

## CHAPTER IV

## GOODNESS THE ESSENCE OF MANHOOD[1]

### I

I SUPPOSE hardly an hour passes in the lives of most people without their hearing the words, "That's good," or "that's too bad." If a phonograph should report conversations held at the same time in different parts of a town it would resound with the conception of goodness. "Get me a good beefsteak." "I want a good piece of silk, one that will not wear out quickly." "Johnny, if you're not good, I shall have to send you upstairs." "I've had such a good time!" "That's a good drive." "That balloon's no good; it's all squashed." "That was a good speech of Roosevelt's." "I don't consider that a good policy." "I've got a good typhoid case for you." "Good for you!"

Such wide uses of "good" cannot but suggest to us that the goodness of man is part of a larger conception of goodness which runs through the universe. What is the *common* element in all good things? Take, for example, a poem: When we call a poem good, we mean that it is one in which all the parts are perfectly adjusted, so that each has its rightful place, large or small, as the case may be. We call a

[1] In this chapter my indebtedness to George H. Palmer's "Nature of Goodness" (Houghton, Mifflin, 1903) is very great.

train good with a similar significance. "That's a good train; it ought to go to New York in five hours." *Ought to,* because that is what it is meant to do, what it is fitted for. Goodness seems to mean fulfilling the purpose, doing what you were meant to do efficiently. Goodness is fitness and fitness for a purpose.

We see at once, however, that we do not judge goodness merely by fitness to any purpose whatsoever. Kindling wood is good when it lights the fire quickly. But a poem of Kipling's is not proved good by the same test.

I have read somewhere the story of an Indian, who, seeing John Lawrence with a newspaper, said: "Give me one, Sahib." Lawrence knew he could not read, and was surprised to see him staring for hours at the paper. Finally the Indian gave it up and pronounced it a bad paper. When asked for his reasons, he said: "I have held it up many hours and my eyes are as uncomfortable as before." The Indian thought of the paper as a cure for weak eyes, and hence bad if it did not fulfil that purpose.

"What a bad day it is," says the tennis player. "What a good rain," says the farmer. They are speaking of the same day, but they have very different purposes in mind. Each is right from his own point of view. Anything is good when fitted for the purpose held in mind, and bad when not so fitted.

In many cases we do not know in relation to what purpose an object should be judged. "Is that good?" says the child, holding up a tin pan pierced with small holes. "Good for what?" I ask. "For a dipper? Most

decidedly not." Unless we clearly know the purpose of anything our judgment is as liable to be wrong as right, or rather we cannot judge at all; knowing the purpose means knowing what anything belongs to, what its relations are. I find a bit of steel and am tempted to throw it away, but my friend comes along and says: "Have you seen the cap that fits over the valve of my bicycle? Oh! I'm so glad; the machine is absolutely no good without it."

Even a great work of art is of significance through the relation of its parts to a central purpose. No single word of Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be or not to be," has any value by itself. Anybody can say "to" or "not" or "be." Yes; but the soliloquy is admirable because each word is a part of a complex whole, into which it fits and there fulfils its special purpose. The word or the bit of steel is not itself when out of its place. It is the servant of an end greater than itself, and without knowing the whole, of which it is a part, we cannot tell whether it is good or bad.

We should at first say, for example, that to light a cigar with a hundred-dollar banknote would always be an outrageous use of money. There was once an occasion on which it was the best possible use of the money. During the war in Cuba one of the American generals was approached by an office-seeker. The general knew he was unfit and refused. As the applicant rose to go he insidiously slipped a one-hundred-dollar bill into the general's hand. "Please stay and smoke a cigar with me," said the general instantly,

and he handed the visitor a cigar. Then he deliberately took a match and lighting the one-hundred-dollar bill held it out to his guest so that he could light his cigar with it. When the bill was in ashes, the general turned again to his work and the dismayed office-seeker retired. The one hundred dollars had served the important purpose of utterly discouraging bribery.

II

It is another aspect of the essential relation between goodness and purpose that when an object has no purpose, or seems to have none, we cannot call it either good or bad. We speak naturally of a good golf stick, a good knife, a good pudding, or a good horse, for we have their purpose clearly in mind, but it seems far-fetched to call a stone either good or bad. You would hardly call a sea-anemone or a snail good unless you were seeking specimens, and therefore had a distinct purpose which you were ready to apply as a test.

It is hard, however, to find examples of absolutely purposeless things, and the reason for this is interesting. It is because purpose is the key which man brings with him to unlock every closed door and he almost never leaves it behind. "What's that good for?" we ask, on seeing anything new or strange. We are at sea until we know. "You're a good-for-nothing vagabond," exclaims the irate housekeeper to the tramp. "*Good-for-nothing.*" That is the worst term of reproach, more disheartening than the sharpest criticism. Here is the wide universe with its myriad opportuni-

ties, needs, and purposes, and you are good in no single one of them all. Yet even the tramp may be a good comrade, for it is hard to find anything that is strictly good for nothing. The very garbage of our city is a fertilizer which helps to beautify our fields. Those who are poorer or more ingenious than ourselves scour our ash heaps to find good things. The ship, after serving its purpose at sea, goes to pieces, water-logged. Has all the goodness gone from it? No, the artist finds it "an unusually good subject"; the buyer of driftwood is willing to pay extra for its saturation with copper, and the barnacles find on it a protecting home. "Dirt is matter in the wrong place," but in its right place, its goodness is preëminent. So many are the purposes of the world, so infinite the fertility of man's growing mind, that the purposeless, that which is "no good," is pushed steadily into lower and lower strata.

> "Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."

"To what base uses we may return." Yes, our bodies return to less noble uses than to hold the conquering mind of a Cæsar or a Shakspere, but they do not become absolutely useless. Purpose is the centre of human life, and just in so far as a man is human, he recognises and constructs purposes. It is the mark of an active and cultivated mind that it sees use, purpose, goodness, where others see blankness or badness.

III

Clearly the "good," is that which is fitted for some purpose. Is it then true that the more purposes any one thing fulfils, the better it is? I was fascinated as a child by an object in our dining-room described as follows: "Day's Patent Chimney Ornaments to represent Gothic architecture are so constructed that they may be used for Fire-screens, Flower or Scent Jars, Candlesticks, Timepiece cases, Candle shades, and various other useful purposes. The patent candle screen may be removed from the stand and used as a hand screen or fan." Of course, it might have been added that it would serve as a reading lesson, an example of elegant English and a paper-weight. That ornament, however, was never made useful.

Here we can again advance a step. It seems that things are not necessarily better because they serve a great many purposes. The best razor is not the one which is also a knife. The best racing boat is not also the one which is safest for children. Some ends seem to be contradictory; we have then to face the question of sacrifice. Goodness involves *not* being everything at once. The Jack of all trades is master of none.

If then an object is not made good by the number or variety of the purposes for which it can be used, wherein does its goodness consist? What is it that makes a good friend good? A good friend is one who embodies in himself the very essence and flower of friendship. He is delicately adapted to that purpose, as the racehorse is bred to perfection for racing.

Sometimes we say of a very slow horse, "That horse is a cow." A bad horse is hardly to be called a horse, for he has not the characteristic qualities. The good umbrella is one that is well adapted to keep off the rain. The good man is he who has in full measure the qualities of a man. The supreme designation of human goodness is that which Hamlet applies to his father:

*Horatio:* "I saw him once, he was a goodly king."
*Hamlet:* "He was a *man,* take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again." [2]

IV

When we compare the use of goodness as commonly applied to things with its use in relation to man's conscious ends, we find a great deal of likeness and several important differences. We will begin with the likeness:

Goodness means fitness whether we apply the word to the goodness of man or to the goodness of anything. The good knife is fitted to cut well, that is what a knife is meant for. The good man is he who is fitted for manhood. The Latin word for virtue (*virtus*) means primarily manliness. The virtuous man is the man who is fully a man, or as we sometimes say, "humane." As the knife is not truly a knife if it has lost its power of cutting, so an immoral man is hardly a man at all. He is a beast. He is *less of a man* than I thought him, we say. It is important to remember the oneness of virtue with

[2] "Hamlet," Act I. scene 2.

manhood; for we have a curious way of using the word "virtue," as if it were something conventional and superficial, instead of the life of man when he is truly man. The outer bark of a tree is not essential to its health, it may fall away without injuring the tree, but below there is living, growing wood, and if this dies, the tree, though it may stand for years, is not alive. So virtue is the growing centre of man's life, and in its death, he dies.

We found that the goodness of anything means its fitness for a *special* purpose, not for the purpose of any other object. This is equally true of the goodness of man. It is not the goodness of anyone else which is our duty, but the goodness for which we are fitted. It is not the duty of St. Gaudens to be a good cook, nor of Edison to sell newspapers, nor of Worth to lead an orchestra. It is the duty of St. Gaudens to carry out his own purpose of embodying great national types of character in sculpture, and of Worth to carry out his own purpose of dressmaking.

As we cannot estimate the worth of anything if we do not know the purpose it serves, so also we cannot estimate any man's act without knowing his purpose. We found in analysing good objects that if any object had and could have no purpose, it was not to be classed as either good or bad. That seems to apply equally to men and to things; but with this difference, that the man with no purpose as a man sinks into a thing, and is generally far more troublesome than any inanimate object because he incessantly interferes with the purposes of others.

We found that it was not best for a piece of Gothic architecture to be also a scent jar and a fan. This is preëminently true of the goodness of man. The question has been admirably illustrated by Professor William James in his "Psychology." [3]

"With most objects of desire, physical nature restricts our choice to but one of many represented goods. I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not if I could be both handsome and fat and well-dressed and a great athlete and make a million a year, be a bon vivant and a lady-killer as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer as well as a tone-poet and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's, the bon vivant and the philanthropist would trip each other up, the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay. Such different characters may conceivably be at the outset of life possible to a man. But to make any one of them actual, the rest must be more or less suppressed. So the seeker of his truest, strongest self, must review the list carefully and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation."

It is important to remember that, in its fundamental idea, goodness is one throughout the vast range of its application from the beefsteak or the knife, to the washerwoman or the statesman. It means always fitness for one's end, fulfilment of what one is meant for.

[3] Wm. James, "Psychology," vol. i., p. 309.

## V

To this great substratum of the conception of goodness, we must, however, add new qualifications when we rise to the goodness of man. We need therefore to notice the *differences* between the goodness of man and of things.

"I've got such a good fountain pen. It flows perfectly." This sounds natural, but I cannot say, "I've got such a virtuous fountain pen." We do not use virtue as applied to things, because they have no choice. It is not the fault of the fountain pen that it is clogged. Virtue and sin are words reserved to express chosen acts. When, therefore, we want to distinguish the goodness characteristic of man from that of things, we call him virtuous. *Virtus,*—manliness, has its own qualities, and these qualities distinguish the goodness of man as man from that of man used as a thing, or even as an animal. Man may be used as a thing, as when in a boatrace a man is used as ballast and is shifted from side to side to adjust the weight. Here his value is simply his weight, and he is good in so far as he fulfils the purpose of ballast.

Again man is an animal and may serve the purpose of an animal. In Italy one sees women harnessed to carts and taking the place of horses. They do it poorly, for they are not adapted to it; a horse or a donkey would do it better. But there is something in our feeling of surprise and pain at seeing them so harnessed that goes far deeper than the sense that the work is cruelly hard. We feel that these women are treated like

slaves, that they are not serving their own ends and so are not living a human life. Slavery was an evil not so much because the work was hard or the treatment cruel as because forced labour tends to make men incapable of a life of their own. Slavery under American civilisation was probably far better for the negroes than the degradation of African freedom. Slavery may even have been necessary for a time. But all subservient and incessant physical labour tends to dull the finer, more human part of people's nature. For this reason we want as far as is possible to have machine work done by things and brutish work by brutes, and to set men and women free for characteristically human tasks.

This brings out a characteristic distinction between men and things. Man can serve his own ends, a thing will serve the end of anyone. The slave in the cotton field was, we sometimes say, a chattel; the hireling who does the bidding of a crafty politician, is called his tool. These are accurate expressions, for such men have become like things, and are serving an end that is in no way their own end. Shakspere likens the subservient courtier to a sponge:

*Rosencrantz:* "Take you me for a sponge, my lord?"

*Hamlet:* "Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be at last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again." [4]

Contrast with this the wonderful scene where again speaking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet

[4] "Hamlet," Act IV. scene 2.

compares playing upon a pipe with playing upon a man's soul.

"Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood: do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me." [5]

It takes skill even to play a pipe, but a pipe will serve the ends of anyone who has sufficient skill, while Hamlet has his own ends to serve.

There is another important difference between the nature of the goodness of man and that of things. Every time a man uses his mind he strengthens it. Every time a man uses his courage he makes it greater, but every time you use a pencil you make it smaller. We have to reverse our standard when we speak of the right usage of a man and of a thing. "Don't use that silk dress so often, you will wear it out." "If you never use your mind, you soon won't have any left." "Of course he can play whist well, he's done it so many times." "Of course the cards are worn out. We've used them so often." A man gains mentally every time he uses his mind, his love grows the more he gives out, his happiness is increased in proportion to the number of those who share it, his sympathy enlarges as he spreads it abroad. A thing then serves another's ends, and is worn out in so doing; a man

[5] "Hamlet," Act III. scene 2.

serves his own ends, and grows more himself by each act of service.

There are pursuits characteristic of man as man. The writing of Shakspere's plays, the invention of the telephone, the oration at Gettysburg, the painting of the Sistine Madonna; these are purposes which no animal can conceive or carry out. Now if we look at such purposes as these, we shall see what they have that distinguishes them from the pursuits of animals, and makes them peculiarly characteristic of man. Each takes thought, each takes imagination, each requires memory, self-control and sacrifice. We have already seen in analysing the morally responsible life that any purpose involves choice, thought, and will. The power of choice has led man to reject immediate satisfaction in view of some far-reaching sympathy. The thought of man has led to commerce all over the world, and through it we listen to the words of Confucius or of Plato as easily as to those of our neighbour. It gives us the inheritage of countless ages for our birthright. The *will* of man has led him to the top of the Matterhorn and down to the depths of the sea. The world lies before him and he looks out to alluring glimpses of beauty and mystery that call him with myriad voices to comprehend, and to create his own.

## CHAPTER V

## HOW TO JUDGE PURPOSES

### I

CERTAIN acts or purposes seem to be always wrong, and others always right. It certainly seems wrong to kill, to take what is not ours, to give pain, to be idle all day; and always right to give up to others, to be liberal, to be industrious. A little experience convinces us that this is a mistake, or more truly, that there is no sense in judging acts in this wholesale way. We have already seen that there is no sin in an act which is done by one who is at the time non-responsible. The baby who pulls his mother's earrings and gives great suffering thereby is not sinful.

Further, the opinions even of educated people differ concerning *deliberate* acts. Ask a number of people whether deception is ever right. Most of them will answer "No," but several will say: "Yes, when the deception is well meant." Ask them again whether it is ever right to be lazy and a few will reply: "Yes, in case you are very tired." A distinguished Chinese mandarin who taught at Harvard College in 1887, distressed and shocked the neighbours, because he insisted on binding up his infant daughter's feet so that they should not grow.[1] He certainly gave pain and

[1] See C. C. Everett's "Poetry, Comedy and Duty," p. 232.

mutilated his daughter's feet so that she was never able to walk. Nevertheless, we cannot call him cruel. The Chinaman knew that his child would be disgraced if her feet were large. He realised that such a condition would cut her off from association with all of her own rank in China and would make marriage impossible for her. His judgment may have been as kind and far-sighted as that of the doctor who vaccinates a crying child. On the other hand, when an indulgent mother gives her little boy everything he asks for, this may be a most cruel procedure. The child either gets sick or becomes selfish, grasping, spoilt, like sour milk. We cannot class as sinful all acts which give sharp pain. We must make at least the distinction between a mistaken and a sinful act. The Chinaman may have been mistaken in squeezing his baby's feet; but if he was fully convinced that it was best for her welfare, we cannot call him sinful.

The case of the Chinese professor brings out a second distinction of importance; we recognise not only the *act*, which clearly gives pain, but the *purpose* back of the act, which in this case is to save future pain or disgrace. As I walk along the street, I see a big man suddenly strike a curly-haired girl of three and so push her into the street. "What a brute!" I exclaim. But as a huge block of ice was about to fall from the roof to the spot where she stood, his instantaneous act probably saved the child's life. I saw an act which I interpreted as brutal. It was really humane.

Our conclusion from these cases is important. *We can never see sin.* We can see a man stealthily take a pocketbook from another's pocket, we can see a man go swaying down the street; but we never can judge by this sight whether either of these men is sinful in the slightest degree. The stealing of the purse may be a prearranged joke, and the swaying may be due to illness, not to drink.

We cannot see sin; we cannot condemn acts just because they give pain or look cowardly or selfish. There is only one way of judging any act fairly, and that is with reference to the purpose behind it. We cannot be sure that striking an innocent child, mutilating your baby's feet, sitting idle all day long, running away during battle, or even deliberately murdering your best friend, are sinful acts. We need in each case to know the purpose which led to the act, we need, that is, many facts, ample knowledge of the context of the act. Take for example a murder. Murder is never the whole content of any sane man's purpose; there is in every murderous purpose something else of which the murder seems to be a necessary part. Claudius, the usurping king in "Hamlet," planned to get the crown; to do so, he had to kill his brother. Hamlet planned to be a loyal son by avenging his father's death; therefore he had to kill his uncle. The deepest purpose in Brutus was to save his country; to gain this end he felt forced to murder Cæsar, who seemed to him a menace to the more precious life of the republic. Claudius, Hamlet and Brutus each com-

mitted murder. The three acts look similar, but are in reality very different.

II

We must penetrate deeper than any visible act. Purpose is the characteristic of moral life and each person's purpose is his own and so is unique. Hence if we are to judge whether anyone is acting sinfully, it can only be by knowing whether he is capable of having a purpose at all, and if so, whether he has chosen it earnestly and is following it loyally and with an open mind. This means that we can pass just judgment only on ourselves and on those whose purposes we know as we know our own. We can demand of ourselves and of all whose purposes we know sympathetically, that if there is a purpose, it shall be *fully* a purpose (as distinguished from a habit or a swarm of dominating impulses), and that it shall be loyally guarded from the dangers of becoming a routine or of being abandoned lightly.

Let us study a few cases which illustrate this point. Maria Edgeworth tells in her "Moral Tales"[2] the story of a child named Rosamond, who has a certain sum of money to spend for new shoes, but who is fascinated by a purple vase in the shop of an apothecary, and buys it instead. Rosamond is described as an impulsive child, tempted by each article in every shop window and not much inclined to consider whether

[2] Maria Edgeworth, "Rosamond, and the Purple Jar."—*Moral Tales.*

the object is all that her fancy paints it. When she has brought the jar home she discovers some water in it and when this is poured out the vase has lost both its colour and its charm. Miss Edgeworth delights to picture the pain which Rosamond suffered when sharp stones pierced her old shoes, and to dwell on her deep repentance of the mistaken choice. There are two sides to this question. The purple vase might not have turned out so disappointingly; it might, as a thing of beauty, have been a joy forever, and far outweighed for her any of the merits of strong shoes; but it seems from the story that Rosamond acted much as does an Indian who eats up a month's supply of food at one week's feast. She let the moment's impulse rule her instead of remembering the many, many days when the stones would cut her feet, and the other children would laugh at her and make her wish that she was not the girl with a purple jar, but the girl with a pair of strong, new shoes. If she had considered this beforehand, she would have known that she did not really (that is, in view of all the circumstances) want the vase.

To be sure, whether or not Rosamond's change of plan was well made, we should need to ask the following questions: Did she think carefully about the alternative choices: the shoes or the vase? Did she try to remember similar mistakes, which, being an impulsive girl, she must have made before? Did she imagine how long the month would be, and how much her wornout shoes would hurt? Did she try hard to find out what the vase was like? Did she try to think

whether it would continue to be what she most wanted during the next month?

When we answer "No" to these questions, we see that she was to blame because she abandoned her purpose to follow a momentary impulse.

The story of Jacob and Esau (Genesis, chap. xxv. verses 29-34) gives a somewhat similar illustration: "And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob: 'Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint . . .' And Jacob said: 'Sell me this day thy birthright.' And Esau said: 'Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?' . . . and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

Esau coming in faint and hungry from hunting saw the pottage of lentils and with hardly a moment's thought was ready to yield up his birthright to Jacob for the momentary satisfaction of his hunger. Did he exercise much clear-sightedness, memory, imagination, self-control, in this choice? No, for as soon as the pottage was eaten he changed his mind and realised that the birthright was of far deeper concern to him than the lentils. As the Bible says, he had despised his birthright, for he had let a single impulse control his whole future life. It is true that under different circumstances Esau's act might have been right. If Esau had been, as he pretended, at the point of death

and only to be saved by food, it would have been right for him to take it. We can never condemn an act merely because it satisfies physical needs and subordinates those which are called intellectual or spiritual. Rosamond chose the vase in preference to physical comfort and Esau chose physical satisfaction in preference to future success in life. Both were sinful acts because they were the issue of half-formed purposes; they were not chosen with clear, resolute attention. We are approaching a very important inference. Sin is always disloyalty to our chosen purpose before we have found one that is more properly our own. It is a double-mindedness that leads to narrow-mindedness.

Take as another example of a purpose wrongly forsaken, the resolve of Hamlet to avenge his father. Many people would say that this was a bad purpose, and that Hamlet was sinful to undertake it. A closer study makes it clear that the real sin in Hamlet was his vacillation after he had determined that this one purpose should wipe all lesser ones from his mind. He chose his purpose under the stress of passionate excitement. He swears that he will sweep to his revenge, that "all trivial fond records" shall be wiped from his memory. "And thy commandment all alone shall live, within the book and volume of my brain, unmixed with baser matter."

When the excitement caused by the ghost's confession is over Hamlet wavers. He persuades himself that he needs more evidence, though at the same time his sense of disloyalty to his vow is keen.

"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
. . . . .
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams—, unpregnant of my cause,
. . . it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal." [3]

Once more he is roused, but once more he hesitates and resolves to seek more evidence. "I'll have grounds more relative than this." The play before the King furnishes the very evidence that he has required, yet still he does not strike the blow. In a moment of excitement he kills Polonius with the expectation of killing Claudius; but, his passion expended in this blow, he lets opportunity after opportunity slip. He still blames himself:

"How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge!
. . . I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do:*
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't." [4]

Again he spurs himself on:

". . . O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!"

Yet even now he does not act. It takes the plot

[3] "Hamlet," Act II. scene 2.
[4] Act IV. scene 4.

against his life to rouse him to revenge, and once more, as if in doubt, he asks Horatio:

"He that hath kill'd my king, and whored my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm?"[5]

The fight with Laertes comes and Hamlet finally kills Claudius with the poisoned rapier, but even here it is perhaps rather the excitement of his mother's death and the sudden revelation of the double attempt to kill him by poison, that stirs Hamlet, not his will to avenge his father.

Hamlet's purpose was not fully a purpose; it lacked the steadiness, the resoluteness of attention which is essential to all good work. He pursued a zigzag course, hot and cold by turns, and impulsive rather than resolute. He was so torn by conflicting impulses of doubt and self-reproach for doubt, that even though his insanity was feigned, the strife in his nature made him indeed almost insane. Hamlet is a double-minded man, and so is unstable in all his ways.

Let us study next a case which exemplifies how purpose may degenerate into habit. Two men graduate from college in the same class and start in business as clerks in the same bank. Ten years later one is president of the bank and the other is still clerk. Both meant at the start to rise in position, but the first man kept see-

[5] Act V. scene 2.

ing and making opportunities to be useful to the higher officials: he stayed overtime when there was pressure of work, he suggested improvements in method and gradually he became the most prominent of the clerks and was promoted. The second clerk opened his books at the stroke of nine and closed them at the stroke of three. He did his accounts accurately, but he did no more than he was told to do. Year by year his books looked neater and his figures more perfect; year by year he did the same work with less thought and less effort. At the end of ten years the general verdict is that he is a valuable machine and that the president is a great deal of a man. The clerk has let his pursuit swamp him instead of controlling it. He has fallen into the non-morality of habit, which means stagnation. Moral life is of delicate balance. Like a bicycle, it can only be poised by being in motion.

In contrast with these half-fledged, hesitant purposes which sit on the edge of the nest and never dare to fly off, or which tumble recklessly out without knowing what they are about, let us look at a genuine and characteristic purpose. Francis Parkman, whose historic writings have lighted up many dark corners of America's past, was from early youth a lover of the wild country, for, as he used to say, he heard the forest calling him. In college he studied history and ethnology, and as soon as he was out of college, he followed the call and started for the wildest part of Oregon. His purpose took a more and more definite shape. It was not alone the wild life among the Indians that attracted him; he wanted to write about

this life, he wanted to know the past of our country in its less civilised days and to tell men of it.

Buoyant and exulting in his strength, he took tremendous rides and underwent great hardships during his trip in Oregon, and when so weak and feverish that he almost fell off his horse, he still persisted in travelling. He came back wrecked in health and was never well again. He suffered agonies which his physicians wholly failed to alleviate. He could not use his eyes, he was sleepless and could walk with difficulty, but he did not give up his purpose. Day by day, resolutely and steadily he worked in the few minutes or hours of comparative freedom from pain. For fourteen years he was unable to do more than gather and arrange a little material, but while trying to get well he seized every safe opportunity for a bit of work. All the available documents bearing on the history of the period he was studying were read to him, and by his tremendous will and memory, he finally succeeded in weaving together a graphic and consecutive story of early American history. He worked till the very end of his life, and the result of fifty years of patient, resolute, clear-sighted loyalty to a single purpose, has been to make him one of our foremost historians.

At the beginning of Parkman's biography is printed the following quotation from one of his writings: "There is a universal law of growth and achievement. The man who knows himself, understands his own powers and aptitudes, forms purposes in accord with them and pursues these purposes steadily, is the man of success." [6]

[6] "Life of Francis Parkman" by Charles A. Farnham, title page.

We have revealed to us in Parkman's life a purpose which is truly a purpose, chosen and carried out with dominant will, clear-sightedness and lifelong persistence. It is preëminently a good purpose; good, because exactly fitted to the man, fully faced and loyally held for fifty years. In order to carry it out he exercised courage, patience, imagination, resolution, industry, unselfish devotion, self-forgetfulness, persistency.

The good purpose then for each man is his own, and so is different in each case; it is fully a purpose, not a wish, an impulse or a dream, but thoughtful and open-minded. When we act rightly, that is as well as we know how, we try to see and feel all sides of the question, to think hard, to make sure that we really want what we are trying for, and that we really know what it is. Then we hold to our choice persistently, although little tugs and strong ones pull at us.

III

In the second chapter I compared the distinction between moral and non-responsible life to the boundary lines between two properties. We took up cases in which it was hard to be sure whether a man was or was not responsible for his act and represented these cases as on the border line between the two fields. If we keep to the same type of illustration, we may say that the truly good act for each man is that which aims at the bull's-eye of his purpose. Wrong acts are those which while chosen, and so within the realm of

responsibility, are yet relatively close to its outer boundary so that the actor often deceives himself into maintaining that they are in the non-moral field. "Why did you hit Charley?" "Oh, I was only fooling." Fooling! Fools belong to the non-moral realm. "I've meant to mend my skirt each day this week, but somehow the time slips by." Here is the dawning of a purpose which is slipping off into a pure dream.

"I know I ought to get down to breakfast with my father at eight; it would make a great difference to his happiness to have me with him, but somehow I can't get out of the habit of sleeping till nine." Here I am running again into the non-moral realm of a habit as uncontrollable as the winking of my eyelid, though my power of considering the fact shows that I am still within the moral boundary, still capable of facing my deeper desire and carrying it through against the force of habit which is holding me tighter and tighter in its clutches every day.

"I planned to study five pages of history every day this week, but one day someone dropped in and asked me to go to ride, and another morning the water looked so delicious that I couldn't resist going in bathing. On Saturday there was a picnic, and Dora came down for the day on Tuesday, so after all I studied just one morning." Here we see the opposite extreme. Instead of being controlled by any habit, either good or bad, I am pulled about by anybody's plan, and though I have made my own, drop it to go wherever fancy moves.

These opposite tendencies (either to be controlled

by habit or pulled apart by conflicting desires) are the two great dangers of moral life. To make clearer this idea of the moral life as one throughout, because held together by some purpose, and yet divided, because in it one is always trying to attain more than one has, I will use an illustration which, though inadequate, may be suggestive.

Here is a pair of scissors. Suppose the blades were so glued together that they could never open, but were wholly one. It would no longer be a pair of scissors. It might be of some other use, but it has lost what gave it its essential character.

On the other hand, I may take out the bolt which holds the blades together. Here again I have what is no longer a pair of scissors, but two unmeaning blades of steel, because the bolt which gave them unity and let them fulfil their function is gone. So it is with morally responsible life. It must be held together as one by purpose and yet be ready to open out; it is thus in a sense divided against itself, its future separated from its present by desire to attain something which as yet it has not. A life of pure habit is like the scissors glued together, too much one to be active. A life torn apart by absolutely conflicting impulses is like the scissors without the bolt, too divided to be a single life. The poise of moral life is between these two dangers, either of which will kill it.

We hear that a man has "gone to pieces"; he is no longer within the control of any plan of his own, but drops into any snare in his pathway as a ball drops into any hole it strikes. On the other hand, we know

people whom it is impossible to rouse from a narrow routine; they are becoming like "sticks and stones and senseless things." In college life, the "grinds" whom no deeper call can rouse from work, and the loafers who cannot pull themselves together for an hour of concentration, exemplify these two dangers. In later life we hear of two types of nervous prostration, the one due to lack of a steadying and illuminating purpose, the other to a dead-and-alive routine work that is growing narrower each day. In each of these cases, a moral being is becoming gradually non-moral and in so doing, is wrecking his human nature. It is fortunate if he finds it out in time to steer his boat back into the current of his purpose.

If we turn again to the life of Francis Parkman we see how he must have met and avoided both the danger of abandoning his chosen work and the danger of doing it in a routine way. The temptation to abandon it would have been irresistible to most of us. How can it pay to struggle through a tangled mass of documents when for fourteen years one can work at most for a couple of hours each day? The allotted time, and with it his strength, is gone before he can much more than arrange his material. Yet his purpose was so clear and steady that it held out through all temptation; he rested when rest was essential and began again, as soon as work was possible, with unquenchable fire. On the other hand, there is temptation to let the palsy of routine creep over any work that one has followed for forty years. To work, read and write and still to keep a glowing inter-

est, takes perennial imagination. Again and again the temptation must have been keen to avoid the new research and finish the book at a given time in spite of the glimpses of fresh material which might or might not prove valuable and which was sure in any case to mean much hard digging in rocky soil. No man knows at the start, or even at any step on the way, just what his purpose will require of him, and it is in rising to meet the demand of those unforeseeable requirements instead of repeating what we already do well, that the finest vigour is shown.

There is every evidence that Francis Parkman aimed steadily and persistently at the bull's-eye of his purpose, neither drifting into abandonment of it nor doing what he did in a routine way. His can stand as the type of a good purpose, unique because his own, clear-sighted, loyal, resolute, open-minded, growing.

## IV

We can gather together the results of this chapter in a final simile. We may think of virtue as self-government, of sin as civil war, and of the non-moral life as anarchy, that is, as total lack of any government. When we visit a new country, we may find plenty of signs of disorder and struggle, or, at the other extreme, of stagnation and inertia, but till we know whether there is any government and what the government is, we cannot really judge of the situation. It may be that there is no one in control (as when people kick and scream under ether), or it may

be that the government is weak, but is doing its best. When, however, we know that there is a government but that part of the nation is struggling to resist the will of the majority, we know there is civil war. This is what happens in sin. We know better, else we should not be sinful but only mistaken; yet a momentary impulse of laziness, narrowness, or cowardice has overthrown for the time the ruling power which is our own permanent or sane will. We have lost in the fight against our impulse. Virtue, like that of Parkman, is the holding of anarchical impulses under the control of a steady, self-governing purpose.

In the course of this chapter we have reached several important conclusions:

1. We can never *see* either sin or virtue.

2. We can never judge of sin or virtue by the consequences of an act.

3. We can judge only by knowing whether the purpose of the actor was carefully chosen and followed with loyalty and open mindedness.

4. It follows that we can accurately judge no one but ourselves and those whose purposes we know equally well.

We have also made several important distinctions between what is harmful and what is sinful.

1. An act is *bad* when its consequences are disastrous.

2. An act is *sinful* when the doer knows it to be wrong.

3. An act may be harmful without being sinful.

4. An act may be sinful without being harmful.

In view of what we have found we can give the following definition of virtue:

To be virtuous is to be open-minded, considerate, and resolute in the choice and execution of that purpose for which you believe yourself most fitted, and to follow it till it opens out to a purpose more your own.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE DARKNESS OF SIN

### I

We worked out in the last chapter two important principles: (1) That no purpose, however cruel, selfish, or cowardly it looks, can justly be condemned at sight, and (2) that virtue is loyalty to purposes chosen and held to with alert intelligence, and thereby steered away on the one hand from the danger of blinded impulse, and on the other, from the danger of blinded habit. This is far different from the ordinary view which labels acts as sinful or virtuous without investigation and which thinks of sin as deliberately chosen. A sympathetic study of cases of acknowledged sin will confirm our view.

(*a*) *Cruelty.* "Why did you hurt Ellen?" I ask of her older brother. "Oh, she is such a cry-baby! It is good for her to be teased, and I didn't mean really to hurt her," is a typical answer, or "We got fighting and she was mean and I struck her harder than I meant to." The cruel act is never committed with full attention to its cruelty, but with some idea of its fun or a half-sophistical assertion that it will do good.

(*b*) *Selfishness.* An act of selfishness is always more or less blind and unimaginative. I have comfortably established myself in a car with all my

bags and parcels on the opposite seat. I have balanced a great bunch of mountain laurel on top of the bundles and I know it will be injured if I have to give up the extra room. The train stops and a number of people throng by, looking tentatively at my extra seat. I become too busy over my newspaper to notice them: I persuade myself that there must be seats farther on, or that someone else had better make room, not I. Of course I am blinding myself. I cannot at the same time realise the fatigue of the tired woman whom I keep standing and yet monopolise two seats, but I can shove aside my better impulse by turning my attention away.

(*c*) *Cowardice.* Another common sin, cowardice, exemplifies in a different way the tendency to blind ourselves. It is for many of us a recurring temptation to put off going to the dentist's. We know that we ought to go, but in September we decide that there will be more time in November and that it is best not to go until then. When November comes it too has a way of gathering to itself engrossing occupations more important, shall we say, or perhaps more agreeable, than dentistry? How can we force ourselves to go? Only by deliberately facing what we really believe, that the short, business-like torture of a few hours is far better than the prolonged agony of toothache. If we can hold this fact steadily before our minds, we shall soon be ringing the dentist's doorbell.

(*d*) *Wilfulness.* Wilful abandonment of one's aims is often close to cowardice. There come times of discouragement when we grow hopeless of ever learning

to play golf or the violin. We feel like throwing it all up. To act on such an impulse is wilful, for we really know, if we chose to think about it, that it would be a great waste to neglect the harvest of all our hard-won skill. But when you act wilfully you don't choose to think. If you listen you can almost hear the click as your mind shuts up. Then come sophistry, glib arguments to excuse ourselves by deceiving ourselves, the snaky "advocatus diavoli" creeping in.

Walter Wyckoff, Professor of Political Economy at Princeton, became deeply interested in the condition of working men and decided in 1892 that he could get the most accurate knowledge of their life by becoming for a time one of them. He started from New York without a cent, planning to earn his way to California by the work of his hands.

Though suffering from hard work and poor food, he earned his way until he reached Chicago. There he shared the plight of an army of workmen who had been attracted by the prospect of work on the World's Fair grounds, and found too late that there was not nearly enough work to go round. Day by day he was refused employment; all the money he had earned before was spent and he nearly starved. One evening when "despondency had almost conquered hope and worn out courage," and even breaking into a shop in order to get arrested seemed possible, he met a sudden temptation. As he wandered along the streets, hungry and utterly weary, he happened to look up and saw through a wide window an intimate friend reading the paper before an open fire. With a great

longing came the impulse to give up his plan and go in. It was not only hunger, dirt, and cold that were hard to bear. It was loneliness, the need of a familiar face, and of the healing touch of cultivated speech to one who had been cursed at by surly employers. The temptation to throw up his plan was keen. Wyckoff found himself asking: Is the experiment worth while anyway? How can it do any good? What difference will it make if I abandon it? Is it not an absurd plan?

No! Wyckoff knew it was worth while and that the arguments of that moment of despondency and weariness were sophistical. Will conquered wilfulness and he turned away from his friend's house and went supperless to sleep in the station-house.

(*c*) *Dishonesty.* Many a defaulter has ruined widows whose money was in his trust, but few, if any, face the fact fully. The defaulter always means to return the money which he has borrowed, and week by week takes a little more to cover his past encroachments. The type is so common that we recognise it at once. We expect to find a sick daughter for the sake of whose health the first money was stolen. The tendency to call your *own* spade a spade is exceedingly rare. If Harry finds a purse in the road and keeps it, Jack may exclaim: "How inconceivably dishonest!" but if it is Jack who finds and decides to keep the money, he does not say: "I know it's wrong, but I am going to do it," but: "Finding is having," or "I am sure I need it more than the person who has lost it." Even professional burglars excuse their raids by theories about the extortions of the rich.

The cases just quoted are typical of the nature of sin. I am well aware that the portrait of the sinner is often drawn with very different lines. Cases of deliberate fiendishness or cool self-acknowledged meanness are apt to come to our minds when we use the word "sin." We think of Nero persecuting the Christians; of Devery, the New York Chief of Police, blackmailing the rich and grinding the poor; of Iago thirsting to revenge himself on Othello; of Quay corrupting legislatures; of Czolgotz assassinating McKinley. At first all sin seems deliberate and open-eyed, and the typical sinner a cold-blooded villain, but on further thought we shorten our list of deliberate villains by ruling out everyone who is morally irresponsible, as it is probable Nero and Czolgotz were. Terrible as were his acts, Nero probably committed them as unconcernedly as a baby crushes a beetle and with as little sense of right or wrong, while McKinley's assassin apparently acted in an insane way for the purpose he thought highest.

Many of the most appalling acts of history are not sins at all, for sin implies as we have seen, both responsibility and the abandonment of what is acknowledged by the sinner himself to be right.

Then as we get closer to men whose acts we disapprove, *e. g.,* to Devery and to Quay, we find them not clearly facing the evil consequences of their schemes, but covering up these consequences by illusive names and dwelling on the brighter side. The Chicago alderman who buys up the voters of his district is (as Miss Jane Addams tells us [1]) thought of and thinks of him-

[1] "Democracy and Ethics," Jane Addams, p. 235.

self as a benefactor who attends the funerals of the poor and helps them out in difficulties.

Croker speaks of himself as "working for my pocket same as the rest of you," referring to the business world, and his famous answer to William T. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews,* was, I believe, largely tinctured with truth. "Mr. Croker," said Mr. Stead, "as you look back over the years during which you have been connected with the politics of New York City, can you recall any act that you are ashamed of?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Croker, "no, not one."

A clear-sighted purpose to do what the actor fully recognises as wrong is as hard to find as a white robin. In the illusion of distance, we seem to see determined, deliberate sin; as we come nearer, we find either insanity, which precludes realisation of the consequences, or a self-deceiving blindness. The sinner always hides even from himself, he is full of plausible arguments, but he is afraid of facing the light. Sin is usually covered up by excuses. No one wants to do wrong, but only to do something which involves wrong-doing. A girl may persuade another to play truant when she knows it is against the school rules, but though she is wilfully doing what is forbidden, she covers it up by saying: "I think the school rules are unjust anyway; it won't really make any difference in our work, and besides it will be such fun to go skating." By this time her attention is fully turned away from the wrongfulness of the act. Self-deceit, narrowness, thoughtlessness, vacillation, blindness, wilfulness, these and not deliberate clear-sighted reso-

lution, are characteristic of the sins of ordinary life.

These examples show that the bad purpose is essentially the blinded, sophistical, vacillating purpose. The sinner keeps out of sight the side of his purpose of which he is ashamed.

The sinful act is sleepy when it should be awake;

The sinful act seeks darkness instead of light;

The sinful act avoids thought and parades in sophistry;

The sinful act vacillates and is uncontrolled.

So far I have considered the negative side. Let us turn to the positive. Anyone who is trying to do right, must think squarely and with full attention about *all* the elements involved in his decision.

"It is hard to hold the right idea steadily enough before our attention to let it exert its adequate effects. whether it be stimulative or inhibitive, it is *too reasonable* for us. . . . We shy away at the thought of it. It twinkles and goes out the moment it appears in the margin of our consciousness, and we need a resolute effort of voluntary attention to drag it into the focus of the field and to keep it there long enough for its associative and motor effects to be exerted. . . . If then, you are asked: "In what does a moral act consist when reduced to its simplest and most elementary form?" you can make only one reply. You can say that *it consists in the effort of attention* by which we hold fast to an idea which, but for that effort of attention, would be driven out of the mind." [2]

[2] Wm. James, "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," p. 186. Read also the following pages.

The practical application of this study of sin is clear. When we are tempted to do anything which we feel may be wrong, we should keep persistently in sight those consequences of our act which we find ourselves inclined to push aside. The effect of this is like changing smoky street lamps to electricity in a disreputable part of the town. Evil cannot flourish in a clear and steady light.

It may seem that Prof. James's rule applies only to a certain type of wrong acts, that of the timid and lazy wrong-doer. We all know also the impulsive wrong-doer, the person of headstrong, self-assertive temperament, who is, we say, carried away by passion. These two types may be represented by two streams, one shallow and slow, drifting into eddies, and stagnating in pools; the other rushing, torrent-like, oblivious of all that it sweeps aside in its impetuous course. A headstrong nature tends to act on any impulse as it arises, pushing aside the consciousness of conflicting claims. Its sins are preëminently those of wilful blindness. A shallow and slow nature is tempted to be deceitful, lazy, cowardly; its faults are the faults of weakness, vacillation and lack of sustained impulse. Suppose a girl of each of these two types sets out to make ten Christmas presents. The first, of impulsive temperament, will throw herself so hard into the work that she entirely ignores bedtime, lessons, or dinner hours, and makes herself a nuisance to all around her by monopolising the parlour table with her litter of materials. The second will get discouraged and be inclined to give up. She starts readily, but soon loses

her ambition; she begins neatly, but ends by hiding her big stitches under a frill of lace, or cutting down her list of presents by half.

We meet these contrasted types in great as well as in small affairs. There is the rash, impulsive speculator, who blindly ignores the fact that he is risking the money which supports his family; and the timid speculator, who deceives himself by calling his theft a loan, and then takes more, on the plea of redeeming the first loan. We see selfish acts due either to an overbearing impulse, or to a narrow lack of sympathy. "I know I ought to give Sophia the concert ticket, but I don't care, I'm not going to do it," or "I don't see why Sophia should have it, I don't believe she really wants it."

I bring up these cases to show that in spite of the wide variety in human nature and the many kinds of excuses made by wrong-doers, one rule of morality holds good for all: Keep your full attention on your purpose so that it bears you steadily forward without sweeping you away. The reason that we are swept away and the reason that we wander into eddies are at bottom the same; the current is not controlled by a clear and steady purpose.

## II

Let us look back once more to our distinction between the moral and the non-moral. Anyone who is carried without power of control into the stagnation of habit or who is swept away by irresistible impulse

is non-moral; anyone who lets go and so drifts, or is swept away, is sinful; anyone who steers straight by strong control of the rudder of attention is acting rightly. In every case sin is misused power. Where there is no power, there is, as we have already seen, no sin, and wherever there is power, it may be turned to good. The impulsive nature may have much power which only needs control, and even the self-deceptive person has a little current which will gradually gain force when the channel is deepened and straightened by increased interest in any pursuit.

We can take here an important step toward an enlightening definition of sin. Whenever we have power, we have that which may be used either to expand or to explode. Where there is wrong-doing, there is always power turned against itself. Let us see in what ways sin is power turned against itself. Helen Keller[3] gives an account of the tempestuous early years before Miss Sullivan opened to her the ability to receive and to communicate ideas through words. Her nature was full of keen, eager power; but it was without any steady, controlling outlet and so it let itself loose in bursts of passionate temper and destructive violence. That energy which was her strongest ally when governed by the purpose to learn, was wrecking her nature by its turbulent upheaval. It was her own power turned against herself. As soon as she learned what words could open out to her, that same destructive energy, now guided and ordered, led her with wonderful swiftness to her fullest life.

[3] "Story of My Life," Helen Keller, chapter iii.

In Helen Keller's case, the change was so swift that it is hard to be sure whether there was really sin in the destructive rebellion of the early years; but the same misuse of power is seen in cases where, because we judge from the inside, we can be sure of sin. Who does not know something of the energy it takes to avoid confession of a sin because of false pride or cowardice?

I remember once taking from the library of my aunt's house a book which was considered unfit for me to read, and craftily concealing it in my bedroom to glean a few pages as I undressed. I knew it was wrong to read the book without permission, but I was still more degraded by the process of concealment which I had to go through whenever a knock came at my door. One day, burying the book under my coat, I took it out to read on the rocks which overhung the sea, when unexpectedly it slipped away from my grasp and plumped into the water. Before I could climb down and fish it out, the leaves were soaked and the red leather binding stained. I was horror-struck. A valuable book which did not belong to me was badly hurt, but, what was worse, there was apparently no way to avoid the humiliating confession that I had read what had been forbidden me as immoral literature and covered my guilt by deceit. There seemed little hope of concealment, yet even then I put an enormous amount of energy into covering my tracks. I dried the leaves carefully one by one in my chamber, guarding as best I could against their tearing. I rubbed the edges of the leather binding to try to obliterate the

spot, and I pressed the swollen book under heavy weights. In the end I had to confess, and still more energy went into preparing for the confession. Then came an anti-climax. My aunt took the fact of my reading the book perfectly simply without other comment than that it was an intensely interesting story, and she was quite undisturbed by the stains on the leather. Here is a typical act of cowardice involving a disproportionate amount of strategy, skill, tact, energy, all used to a foolish end instead of pushing forward a growing plan.

It may seem that the wilfully lazy person at least does not in sinning turn power against himself. He of all people would seem to be exerting no energy in his listless career. Yet even here close scrutiny shows power turned against itself. I plan to go to the opera; but I am so lazy that really I can't buy the tickets myself. I wonder how I can manage to get somebody else to buy them for me. As likely as not I put an hour's good, hard thought into planning an act it would take me twenty minutes to carry through and in the end let it fail, because I do not see it carried out.

Even the lazy person, if sinfully lazy, has power and uses it against his own intent. When the lazy person refuses to work for what he truly wants, we tell him in graphic slang: "It's your own funeral," and the phrase is strictly accurate. By indulging in laziness he is becoming more and more incapable of industry even for what he keenly wants; he is slipping into that iron grip of habit which is moral death, he is literally committing suicide.

At the outset, he had power to frame an honourable plan of self-support and to identify himself with it. He knew it would be hard; but he refused, to be a pauper, a parasite, sucking from the veins of society what he had not earned. He set out to work, but laziness blurred the picture of himself as a pauper, and he descended to begging. The energy he might have put into being a self-respecting worker, goes into being a wheedling liar in order to squeeze out loaves of bread and scraps of meat by a pitiful story of unreal woes. Day by day the self-respecting purpose is weakened until, final degradation, he ceases to feel degraded. The being who was a man has become an automatic blood-sucker.

A very important truth follows from the fact that sin is power turned against itself, I mean the truth that as long as power persists there is hope that it may cease from preying on itself and begin to nourish itself.

Stevenson writes in "Old Mortality" [4] of a talented friend whose power was turned to ruin his life and who came home like a spent swimmer to die. From the world's point of view, his life was over and disastrously ended, but the tide had turned. "From this disaster like a spent swimmer, he came desperately ashore, bankrupt of money and consideration, creeping to the family he had deserted; with broken wing, never more to rise. But in his face there was a light of knowledge that was new to it. . . . The tale of this great failure is to those who remained true to him the tale of a success. In his youth he took thought for no

[4] "Memories and Portraits," R. L. Stevenson, p. 52.

one but himself; but when he came ashore again, his whole armada lost, he seemed to think of none but others. Thus was our old comrade, like Samson, careless in his days of strength; but on the coming of adversity and when that strength was gone which had betrayed him—'for our strength is weakness,' he began to blossom and bring forth."

III

We are now ready to give a final definition of sin and to see why certain typical sins are forever to be condemned. Sin is wilful abandonment of any chosen purpose, it is disloyalty to your own ties, it is your own power used to destroy you. There is no purpose chosen with full attention and clear facing of all sides of the question that we can call sinful, though it may be injurious.

Sin is the failure to face and so change, enlarge or confirm a purpose. The sinful act is that which hangs in mid-air, or is blown about by the puff of every whim. The sinful act is essentially the slipshod act. Either to go barefoot or to wear shoes may be a wise decision, but to wear shoes and then be slipshod, is the characteristic of sin. To sleep in a castle or under the open sky are differing purposes, but to start to build a house and leave the boards dangling in air because you are tired of the idea, is sin. To leave your stockings with holes in them because you decide it is more important to pass an examination or to nurse a sick friend, is virtue; but to leave your needle and

darning cotton hanging to the half-mended stocking, because, first, a new novel, then a piece of candy, and then a hand-organ allures you, is sin. The purpose of mending your stocking is then no more a purpose than a shattered vase is a vase. Neither can hold water. Wilfully to abandon a purpose is to be demoralised, for purpose is the centre of morality.

If, then, there are certain tendencies which always and everywhere tend to destroy any purpose whatsoever by preventing it from being fully a purpose, we can condemn these tendencies absolutely. We can say, for example, laziness is always wrong. Why? Because if one has no purpose, like a log, one cannot be lazy, but, if one has any purpose whatsoever, laziness means neglect of that purpose.

The bell-boy in a hotel is trying to earn enough money to go to college. Is it clear-sighted of him to be lazy? Is that by any possibility the best way of carrying out his purpose? Will it ever help anyone in carrying out any purpose to be lazy? If not, laziness is always wrong. The same tests may be used in relation to cowardice. If a child plans to learn to swim, will it help him in any conceivable way to be cowardly? True, he may wisely avoid deep water when he is alone and uncertain of his power, but this is sensible, not cowardly; true also, he may wisely take much longer than his companion in venturing beyond his depth; but cowardice, the avoidance of such risks as are involved in the sensible fulfilment of his careful plan, is always to be condemned, because it is an adversary to any purpose whatsoever.

On the other hand, courage, industry, imagination, clear-sightedness, help us in whatever we undertake, and as the allies of all moral life are universally to be honoured. Without courage, I can no more be a good friend than a good swimmer, just as without imagination and industry I cannot be a good engineer or a good farmer.

We can say, then, "Every deed is sinful in which you are unfaithful to your purpose." The Greek citizen took a vow of faithfulness to the country, and though we make no definite, explicit and public vow, we too, as human beings, have our tie of allegiance. Human life, the life which distinguishes us from animals and things, is the life of purposes and it is the duty of everyone to be loyal at whatever cost to his purpose or aim.

Laziness, selfishness, cowardice, blindness, always hurt you in carrying out that life for which you were meant. They are always and absolutely wrong because they betray the cause to which we all are dedicated. This faithfulness or loyalty to our aim, which I have described as the opposite of sin, is often called *following our conscience.* We must study the meaning of conscience.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE

### I

If we turn back and look along the path we have come, the most striking fact we discover is, that all along our road we have been guided by the clue of purpose. It will meet us at every turn, for it is the keynote of moral life and all harmonies and discords are such in relation to this fundamental note.

The virtuous man is he who loyally fulfils his chosen purpose, his own and not another's. If everyone had exactly the same purpose and so the same duty, it would be a far less interesting world, but it would be one in which it would be easier to tell whether a man was doing right or wrong. If, for example, we were all playing golf, it would be comparatively easy to judge whether any one of us was doing his best; but, because the range of purpose is as wide as the nature of man, and every purpose is different, no external judgment is possible. We cannot then tell a good purpose or act from a sinful one simply by looking at it. Can we ever tell the difference? Are there any tests?

Yes, we have found that any purpose was a virtuous one, if it were chosen and carried through with as

thorough thought, sympathy, and will as possible—in short, with full attention. Whenever we sin we have not put as much vivid attention into our act as we might have done.

A very common way of speaking of a wrong deed, is to say: That was not done conscientiously, or that was done against conscience. Conscience is assumed as the authority by obeying which we shall do right. Now in the light of all that has been said above about right and wrong, what do we mean by conscience? Whenever we have any hard question to attack, the best way is to think of cases exemplifying what we are studying and to notice carefully what is involved in such cases. The analysis of a case of conscientious action will help us to define conscience. If, for example, the President of the United States is called on to decide whether to give the Filipinos self-government, how can he make a conscientious decision? We get much light on the question by noticing first what he would not do.

Would he decide by tossing up a penny? If not, then conscientiousness is not trusting to chance, but is a deliberate or thoughtful decision.

He may have a strong instinct that freedom is best. Ought he to trust to feeling? If not, then conscientiousness is not trusting to instinct. It requires clear thought and persistent study.

Could he decide conscientiously by earnestly pondering the question in his study? No, for he must be saturated with the facts of the case, and this shows that a conscientious decision is made, not alone

by self-searching, but by an out-going, truth-seeking activity.

Could he decide rightly without realising the aspirations and the sufferings of the Filipino? If not, then strong, yet, as we saw above, controlled feeling, is necessary to a conscientious decision.

Could he decide fairly if he felt strongly only the side of the Filipinos and scorned what he called American commercialism? If not, conscientiousness means the putting aside of prejudice.

Would it be a conscientious decision if at any time he decided the question because the endlessness of the search discouraged him? If not, then conscientious action includes the will to persist against difficulties.

Would it be conscientious to postpone the question indefinitely because there are always more people to consult and more facts to learn? If not, it is conscientious to make a decision when the moment for action arrives, in spite of the risk of deciding wrong.

I will gather up these conclusions: To be conscientious in deciding this question about the Filipinos, we must use hard thought, warm sympathy, and steady resolution to get at the essential facts. A conscientious decision is one which is based on the most thorough investigation of facts we can attain, and to get at these facts we must put aside prejudice for or against either side of the case, we must be industrious and persistent, sympathetic in our attitude toward all whose reports we hear, warm in our zeal to obtain the truth, courageous to face criticism and to keep at our task in spite of difficulties, unselfish in unwearying devotion. And

last, but not least, we must be resolute to make a decision when the right time comes.

Evidently all the virtues are flocking in to make our task possible, and this is natural, because the conscientious act is the act of the whole man recalling and fulfilling his aim. Conscience is not any single part of our nature; it is simply ourselves vividly recalling and pursuing our task. To be conscientious is to use all our power in facing and fulfilling our aim.

Plato's "Crito" gives a magnificent example of a conscientious decision in a very difficult case. A wonderful standard of conscientiousness gleams out through the quiet words of Socrates, seeking only to be true to his light and not to let his personal desires affect him for an instant, ready to be convinced that it is right to escape, if reason can convince him, but never taking advantage of his friend's eagerness to save him. At the end, Crito is so impressed by the greatness of the truth revealed through Socrates, that in spite of all his longing for the opposite verdict, he is silent. In studying this case, as an example of conscientiousness, we notice the absolute freedom from prejudice or self-seeking in Socrates. His desire is to get the opinion of the good and thoughtful and not to accept the opinion of ignorant or biassed men. In his certainty that we must not do wrong that good may come, in his persistent search for truth and in his resolute and calm acceptance of it, he never wavered. The voice of conscience murmured in his ears like the sound of the flute: "Let me follow the intimations of the will of God."

"Think not of life and children first and of justice afterwards, but of justice first."

"Now, you depart in innocence, a sufferer, and not a doer of evil."

Socrates was wholly at peace in the decision which involved his death, and the reason is that he knew, as few men do, the strongest aim of his life, and had the rare power of thinking without prejudice, thoroughly, fearlessly, resolutely, on what keenly concerned himself. Even in the written words we find a peace felt by his disciples despite the anguish of his approaching death—a peace due to the sureness and firmness of the decision. Hard as the decision is, it is made without doubt and without regretful turning back.

II

If we study other difficult moral decisions we shall find in each that the clue to the solution of conscientious doubt is found in accordance with the following rules: First, we can make no decision at all unless we know what is the strongest, most central purpose of our lives, and can group our minor ends around it; second, we can only make a truly conscientious decision by putting aside prejudice; and third, by searching for all important and relevant facts.

A modern example of the same quality of conscientiousness shown in the "Crito," has only recently been made known to the world. Owing to the delicacy of his lungs, Robert Louis Stevenson was throughout his life forced to seek climates where he could gather

sufficient vitality to work. At the time when this question of conscience confronted him, he was thirty-six years old and had already become well known as an author. He loved his work and was very much absorbed in it. He was married and his wife also was delicate. Though interested in politics, he had never taken an active part in them, but in 1886, his sense of justice was roused by the tolerance of the English Government towards lawless actions, which went on in Ireland without punishment. In spite of his instinctive sympathy for the Irish who hated their English landlords, he thought it absolutely wrong for the government to let these landlords be persecuted by the roughs of the neighbourhood and not interfere to enforce law and order. Finally he was startled and shocked by the murder of an English landlord named Curtin and by the constant persecution of his wife and daughters, who lived unprotected on a lonely farm exposed to the insults and annoyances of the rough Irish tenants. Stevenson knew that it was useless to get the English Government to interfere, for they had again and again let such things happen without rebuke, and he began to wonder whether it was not his duty to live on the exposed farm, protect the Curtin family and take the risk of being killed. The task was repugnant to him, but he felt that it might be a public duty in view of which all private duty should be put aside, and it seemed to be *his* duty because there was no one else who would take it up.

Stevenson has given us in a letter [1] which he wrote

[1] See "Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," vol. ii. p. 30.

to a friend asking for advice on this subject, so wonderfully accurate an account of a conscientious decision, that we can learn a great deal from the detailed study of it. If we are asked the question: How does one make a conscientious decision, we can answer just as Stevenson did. Here is his question: Ought I to live on this farm in order to protect these women and get redress for them? To answer this question he must consider:

1. Is the need pressing? Yes, clearly, and no one is supplying it.

2. Can I do what is needed? Yes, my fame will help even if I am murdered.

3. Is my doing it compatible with my chosen work? Yes, I can go on writing there, and in any event my life is so uncertain that its sacrifice is relatively unimportant.

So far the balance is in favour of going. Imagine the temptation to avoid this repugnant, dangerous deed! How easy to persuade oneself that it was wrong. Stevenson takes up and answers the objection to going with the same care and fairness.

1. It will do no good. He recognises at once that this is the temptation to self-deceit, characteristic of sin.

2. He considers his duty to his wife, but decides that when one really loves, one love's a man's character, and so would rather suffer than have him unfaithful to duty.

3. He thinks of all he must give up, but finds it worth while since the cause is a just one.

4. He tries to see whether he is deceived into think-

ing it his duty; whether he is doing it for the sake of excitement or glory; he ends by begging his friend not to dissuade him from the attempt, provided she thinks it is right.[2]

We learn through this example that in any conscientious decision one puts aside prejudice and seeks for light, dreads self-deception and longs for truth, however much it may cost. One looks thoughtfully and with as much sympathy as possible at all the facts. One considers both the need and one's own life as impartially as if they were not one's own and as sympathetically as if they were one's greatest interest. When the evidence is once in, as far as is necessary or possible, the conscientious man makes up his mind and holds to his determination.

A very difficult moral decision was made by many a Southerner at the outset of our Civil War, between loyalty to his State or to the nation. General Robert Lee was a typical Virginian, a son of that noble and powerful State that gave the nation the services of Washington and of Patrick Henry in the Revolution. His tie to Virginia was intense, it was like the tie a man feels to his mother. He decided as many of us would decide in case of conflict between the two, that loyalty to the State came before loyalty to the national government. General Thomas, who was also a Virginian, decided that his bond to the nation came before that to his State.

Now these decisions,—whether to free the Filipinos

[2] Stevenson finally decided to abandon this plan on account of his father's declining health.

or whether to fight for State or nation, are exceptional only in the magnitude of the issues involved. Problems involving the same type of struggle come to all of us and can rightly be solved only in the same way, that is, first by knowing what is our central or most inclusive purpose, and second, by trying to discover all the important facts in the case.

At the time when I usually study my next day's lessons, someone comes in and asks me to go with her to hear Kreisler play a violin concerto. Which ought I to do? My inclination bends me strongly toward the concert, but I jerk myself to the other side by remembering that I want to pass my college examinations and that this object is not best attained by going to concerts. Still I love music and it is a rare opportunity to hear a famous violinist. If I have no single over-arching plan my mind will simply rebound like a shuttlecock from one idea to the other, and my final decision will be made by some sweep of impulse, due, probably, to a final word of persuasion from my visitor. "Never mind the old lessons, do come, it will be lots of fun." According to the strength and clearness of my purpose, will be the ease of my decision in this case where the facts are easily known. If my main purpose is to be a violinist, and my plan of going to college is distinctly secondary, I shall hardly hesitate at all. If I have never made up my mind which is my more inclusive or central object, I shall vacillate endlessly.

In other decisions our purpose is clear, but a veil hangs over the pertinent facts by which alone we can

decide whether a given act will really help or hinder our purpose. A sick-looking, poorly-dressed woman applies to me for aid. I want to help her and I am ready to give freely of my time and money if I can do her good. My purpose is wholly clear. She asks me for money and clothes and I find it hard to decide conscientiously whether I ought to give her any. The whole question is whether money is what will help her, and this decision cannot possibly be made by any consideration of my purpose or of the bare issue as presented by the woman, but only with the aid of a thorough investigation of facts. When I have found that the woman's husband earns $10 a week and can be made to support her comfortably if pressure is used, my decision is clear. The same act, that of giving money and clothes, becomes right or wrong according to circumstances, and a conscientious decision must always be one which tries to take full account of circumstances.

Ruskin says in the preface of "Sesame and Lilies," that every girl ought to spend part of each day in making clothes for the poor, and adds: "Even if you should be deceived and give them to the dishonest, never mind, for the pawnbroker must sell them to someone else who has need of them. That is no concern of yours. What concerns you is that when you see a half-naked child, you should have good, fresh clothes to give it."

Is Ruskin's decision to give the beggars warm clothing regardless of consequences, a conscientious one? We can be sure only if we know whether he really

tried to get light on the subject. It seems to me, as if he had let himself be prejudiced, that is, had prejudged the question before tracing the consequences of the acts he advised. Think what would happen if we gave to every poor child. Very soon other ragged children would be sent out whether they needed clothes or not to beg; much of the money would be spent for drink, and the fathers, finding that they could thus be supported by charity, would become utterly lazy.

In the Middle Ages no one doubted that it was virtuous to give clothes to the poor indiscriminately; now we know better. Our consciences are more enlightened. We know that there is no such swift and easy way of doing good. In emergencies we may be able to save another from starvation without much time or effort; but really to *help* another means giving oneself, one's strength, thought and sympathy for years. We know that money is quite as likely to do harm as good (because it takes away the need of self-support) unless we help people to raise themselves.

Ruskin may have been well-meaning, but he was not conscientious. Well-meaning people when thoughtless, should not be called conscientious, for conscientiousness does not mean following any unquestioned instinct, it means putting thought and imagination into our decisions and the effort to put aside all that makes us unmanly or inhuman,—prejudice, laziness, selfishness, brutality. If conscience is simply careful, unprejudiced thought about moral problems, it is evident that conscience can be educated and enlightened. The

question, Can conscience be educated? does not essentially differ from the question, Can man grow in character and knowledge?

III

This definition of conscience helps to clear the question whether it is possible to be too conscientious. If we define conscientiousness as the constant will to find the truth and follow it wherever it leads, it is impossible that we can be too conscientious. It is true that what is meant by over-conscientiousness is a real fault and danger; but it is a mistake to use the same word for the central requisite to good living, and also for a sin or flaw. We do not speak of over-courageousness, but call it rashness or foolhardiness, for we cannot have too much courage.

The word "over-scrupulous" is a good substitute for over-conscientious. Here is a description of a scruple by Jeremy Taylor: "A scruple is a great trouble of mind proceeding from a little motive, and a great indisposition by which the conscience though sufficiently determined by proper arguments, dares not proceed to action, or if it do, cannot rest. Very often it hath no reason at all for its inducement, but proceeds from indisposition of body, pusillanimity, melancholy, a troubled head, sleepless nights, the society of the timorous, from solitariness, ignorance or unseasoned, imprudent notices of things, undigested learning, strong fancy or weak judgment, from anything that may abuse the reason into irresolu-

tion or restlessness. The reason of a scruple is ever as obscure as the light of a glow-worm, not fit to govern any action, and yet it is sufficient to stand in the midst of all its enemies and like the flies of Egypt, vex a whole army."

We can be too scrupulous, but that is when we are not sufficiently conscientious. A girl who studies so hard when she is tired that she makes herself ill is not conscientious, if we mean by conscience the use of our mind, feeling and will. She ought, if truly conscientious, to stop working, just as the President ought at a given time to come to a conclusion about the Philippines and act.

Hamlet was not acting conscientiously when he let himself question his duty again and again after he had vowed to perform it. As he says, he let "the native hue of resolution" be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," instead of carrying out his resolution. That was lack of conscience, and more truly under-conscientiousness than over-conscientiousness. He was over-scrupulous.

Conscience is a word of great historical significance, and if it is to keep its significance, we must mean by it the quality shown by Socrates, by Brutus, by Lincoln, by Stevenson, of perfect openness to receive the light, and of a will consecrated to follow it. If used in this sense, it is as absurd to say: "She is too conscientious to act wisely" as it would be to say: "He knows too much about law to be a good judge."

Let us see just what difference there is between conscientiousness and scrupulousness. Over-scrupulous

people think about themselves when they ought to think about what they are doing, or, they think disproportionately about trifles or they rehearse decisions already made to the neglect of more important engagements.

Early in the last century, Dorthea Dix encouraged a group of little girls who were her pupils to write notes to her every evening telling of all the sinful thoughts they had had during the day. The current of healthful, vigorous interest, which is goodness, was turned back into a petty, morbid dwelling on self. "I wonder whether I didn't feel a little vain when I put on that new hat."

What should we think of a general who stopped in the midst of an assault to wonder whether he believed in the cause for which he was fighting? The conscientious man looks out rather than in, and is too intent on finding out what ought to be done to have time to waste in brooding over his sins. Once and for all in undertaking any work, we have to estimate our own power in regard to it, but this can be done in a wholly impersonal way without over-rating or under-rating ourselves, purely to find out whether it is well to undertake it. As soon as the personal intrudes it blurs our outlook and in so far makes our deed fail; hence it is sinful.

Again when we have failed in any pursuit we look back to see whether the failure was inevitable and unforeseeable, or was due to our own fault; it is sensible to do this in order that we may never so fail again.

I educate my boy for college and he fails to pass the

examinations. If I am conscientious I try to find out why, in order that I may not repeat the mistake. I look at my motives to see whether selfishness or laziness prevented my being thorough, that is, I ask whether I have been conscientious enough that I may stand blameless or guilty in my own judgment. But if this self-examination hinders instead of helps me for future action, it is wrong. I need all my energy for conduct and cannot afford to spend any of it on anxiety about my conduct.

The habit of deliberate consideration of what we ought to do should be just as little introspective and morbid as the consideration of whether we shall climb Mont Blanc. Before deciding we need to consider its dangers and advantages, after deciding to go we need to consider the best paths and methods of climbing up. If we fail to attain the top or get hurt in coming down, we need to consider why we made such blunders in order that the next ascent may be more successful, but there need be nothing more of morbid analysis in any moral decision than there is in this one.

What is called over-conscientiousness is moral hypochondria, nervousness, not nerve, the very opposite of conscientiousness, because the element of intelligence, of vivid attention to what we are about, is left out. As the perpetual will to find the right act, conscience is the true guide of our lives, and the more conscientiousness we possess the more freely will our lives reach out toward their ideal.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CONSCIENCE, CUSTOM, AND LAW

### I

When a very small boy breaks a window pane by playing ball on it, we say to the indignant owner: "I am exceedingly sorry, but he did not know any better." When the boy is older, we rebuke him: "You ought to know better," and to the full-grown youth we give the superlative reproof "You knew better."

The result is the same as far as the expense of a pane of glass is concerned; the action was a bad one in the sense that glass was not a fit surface on which to play ball, but the verdict is different in each case. Not to know any better is not to have any conscience on the subject, but when we ought to have known better we have not brought into play all the intelligence we possess, and when we know better we wilfully suppress the fuller view of the matter which is the insight of conscience.

Conscience is simply the man himself mindful of his aim. The conscientious act is that which is awake, alert, attentive, resolute. The boy who acknowledges that he knew better than to play ball against the window-pane has admitted that he acted unconscientiously because he blinded himself to the probable consequences of his act. Instead of thinking about the glass he thought

only about playing ball and squeezed out of view the intrusive vision of the whole situation. "It's too much bother to walk over to the barn to play ball and probably the window pane is tough," he argues.

Anyone who has made up a bed, swept a room or practised a hard piece of music, knows vividly what the difference is between a conscientious and an unconscientious act. "My mother always taught me to sweep out the corners of a room into the centre at the start," said one of the best cleaners I ever knew, "because then I had to sweep thoroughly the centre where the dust showed." The conscientious act is that which sweeps out into plain sight the dust of wilful inattention and self-deceit which lurks in the corner. In practising a hard piece of music the unconscientious pupil will find himself going frequently over those joyous phrases where the fingers run easily along and the tune rings out deliciously, and slurring the hard, rugged, irritating passages which he has not conquered. The really conscientious player thinks not of the pleasure of the moment, but of his aim to know the whole piece, and turns his attention especially to those passages which he finds himself inclined to skip.

Conscientiousness is the putting away of prejudice and the using of thought, feeling and will; that is, of all our power, to see and to execute our purpose. It is the whole of us calling out to some insurgent fraction. The truly conscientious act is always right, because it is the expression of the best in sight. The act of Brutus in murdering Cæsar may have been disastrous to Rome, but in so far as it was conscientious,

it was free from sin and failed not when judged by the criterion of virtue. There is a saving power in the effort to do our best, however poor that best may be.

So far we have spoken of conscience as if each act were done without reference to the beliefs of those around us, but moral decisions are rich and subtle because of the myriad consciences which have made and are making the atmosphere we breathe. Even apart from the direct influence of those whose teaching and example has made the ground-work of our lives, the conscience of the race affects and sways us in long established laws and customs. That part of law which concerns us here is the average morality of the past embodied in definite form and with definite penalties. Without its support and control none of us would have a chance to carry out his plans. We are more aware of law as a restraint than as a means of freedom, but the latter aspect is in truth far more important. The "free" savage is daily in danger of his life and hampered at every turn by the need of expending energy in self-protection. In civilised countries men are free to pursue their own ends just because a strong bulwark of law surrounds them. It is true of course that any fence which shuts one safely in also shuts *out* the marauder, and so law has necessarily its aspect of restraint, but the freedom it gives to the majority far exceeds the restraint to our insurgent impulses.

II

Law, then, is the embodied morality of the past and therefore sustains the present. Is it ever right

to break through this bulwark? Two instances will bring the issue before us. The laws of the United States require that a duty shall be paid on most articles brought in from foreign countries and that any dutiable goods shall be declared. Many people, however, bring home new clothes (exceeding the free limit), presents for their friends and foreign souvenirs without declaring them, and often bury them in their trunks with such ingenuity that they are not found. The arguments by which such evasions are justified are often as ingenious as the skill shown in hiding the dutiable articles. "The law is an unjust and tyrannical one and ought to be broken; the law is not really meant to apply to tourists, but only to merchants; it is the custom-house officers' business to find the articles and if they do not, it is not our affair to tell them. We don't believe in protection and it's a shame to pay money which we need to the government which has already an enormous surplus."

What is buried out of sight in this pleading is the fact that in a democracy every citizen is responsible for its laws, and by his very acceptance of citizenship has pledged himself to obey them, and the fact that deliberate disobedience to any law tends to weaken the structure of government on which the life of his nation has been built up. If I deliberately break the tariff law and you the game law, how can we blame anyone who is disloyal to the civil service law or the liquor law? In breaking any law, we are taking a spoke out of the wheel of government, and implicitly inviting others to do the same; we are taking the first step, even though

it may be a short one, toward anarchy. It is true that there are many laws which are dead shells, long since cast off and now so openly broken that no one cares to change the literal wording of the statutes. Such are many of the Sunday laws in Massachusetts: for example that which makes golf playing on Sunday a penal offence. Such laws, if openly and constantly broken, ought to be repealed, but the tariff law is not one of these submerged and obsolete laws. It is constantly in evidence and desired by the majority of our legislators.

The question which faces us here is whether the saving of money for ourselves justifies us in weakening our government by deliberately breaking its laws. The further question arises whether in case we decide to break the tariff law, it can ever be right to do so by ingenious concealment and evasion. To this last question there seems to me to be only one answer: No! All of us would condemn the meanness of anyone who concealed himself behind another man and slipped out of a restaurant without paying for his dinner; we should scorn his plea that it was the cashier's business to see that he was paid. There are few but would condemn the dressmaker who before landing winds so many yards of dutiable lace around her body that she appears to have gained twenty pounds during the night, yet there are not a few who will hide a foreign cameo in the toe of a shoe and fool themselves into thinking it fair play. That such practices are degrading to character is shown by the sophistry of the arguments by which they are sup-

ported, for sophistry, as we have so often seen, is the boon companion of sin.

The tariff law in so far as it applies to tourists, is relatively unimportant. It touches only a small and comparatively rich class and these only at rare intervals. If, however, we hold that this law is unjust, the way to break it is through open protest, through argument before legislatures or voters, or if the latter is hopeless, through the trial of a test case in court which will thoroughly air the matter before the public.

We come nearer to the heart of the relation of law to morality when we take up a more complicated and doubtful case. It often happened, shortly before the Civil War, that a fugitive slave would escape to the North and seek shelter in the house of some kind-hearted citizen. The national law still held that fugitive slaves should be arrested and returned to their Southern masters, yet this might mean physical torture and was sure to mean a bondage against which most Northerners revolted. Was it right to obey the law and yield the unhappy negro up to his master? We saw in the case of smuggling articles through the Custom House, that breaking any law began the process of undermining the government. We must face this fact here as we did before, but this time we are dealing with a law that seems not only mistaken and annoying, but wrong and brutal. It may be of help roughly to class under three heads, the laws which we are tempted to disobey.

1. Many laws like the game laws, or those against obstructing the sidewalks by lingering in groups may

inconvenience a few people, yet are clearly for the good of the whole.

2. There are laws like those of the tariff, which we may consider mistaken, but which we ought to obey until we have a chance to get them repealed.

3. There are laws which are really injurious to the community as a whole, but which the majority is not yet ready to repeal.

The Fugitive Slave Law seems to come under this last head. The North and South were divided in regard to it and Massachusetts had passed a State law more or less in opposition to the national law. There had been much struggle in Congress regarding the whole question, but there seemed no immediate hope of repeal and each slave who escaped brought the issue to a point where a difficult decision must be made and made at once. The question was relatively clear for any judge who must decide in Court whether a slave must be returned or for an officer of the law who was called to arrest a slave. Anyone who has accepted an office under the government and sworn duly to administer its laws, ought fully to have faced the fact that he is a servant of the government and bound to obey its commands and to execute its laws until he resigns his office.

The question is harder for the private citizen to whom the fugitive negro applies for shelter. To what principles can he appeal in order to make a conscientious decision? There are three clues which give real help: First, he must rouse himself to face the situation both from the side of the planter and the slave;

second, he must think out the meaning of law and government; third, he must try to get at as many important facts in the case as possible. I assume of course that there is time to make a careful decision before any pressing need arises.

(1) Important decisions are often made in an unconscientious way, because they are made from prejudice instead of with a fresh, vivid imagination of the whole situation. One man thinks almost exclusively of the slave, and, moved by compassion, decides that he will shelter in his house anyone who applies to him; another thinks mainly of the property rights of the South, or of his own risk, and decides to wash his hands of the matter. The man who wants to make the best decision, opens himself to receive eagerly yet controledly, all that can truly be said on both sides, like a flower that opens to receive the sunlight. Only in such an attitude is he ready to meet the situation.

(2) In thinking what law means, he will find as we found in studying the custom-house decision, that loyalty to law rests on the fact that our national life, to which we owe our freedom and protection, is weakened by every deliberate disobedience, and that in sheltering the slave, we are also weakening the nation. We are then brought face to face with a conflict of loyalties, that to humanity as embodied in the runaway slave, and that to our nation, which on the whole has fostered a liberal, humane spirit. Is there any act which expresses loyalty to both?

(3) A careful investigation of all accessible facts helps our decision by bringing the true situation clearly

before us. In this case the struggle which culminated in the Fugitive Slave Law has a long and enlightening history, and a study of the whole situation might fairly lead one to the conclusion that the country was so torn with irreconcilable opinions that it was on the verge of revolution. "This country cannot long endure half-slave and half-free," Lincoln said, and this realisation makes easier the decision which perhaps furthers, but in no way initiates a revolution. Each man's duty is new, and each generation has, if it is growing, new light which those who made the laws cannot foresee. Therefore, when the laws cannot be so interpreted or changed as to meet the requirements of a clearer insight, rebellion may be right. A growing seed at some time necessarily bursts its once useful shell, and a once useful law may become a drag on progress, and if it cannot be voted down must be broken. Even when, however, the decision is made to break the law, the method of doing it may be valiant and helpful, or it may be cowardly, and so thwarting to advance.

"In October, 1851, Jerry McHenry, an athletic mulatto and industrious mechanic who had been living in Syracuse, N. Y., for several years, was claimed as a fugitive slave by a man from Missouri. . . . Jerry was imprisoned over night in a police office to await the conclusion of the examination on the morrow. He had, unknown to himself, many ardent friends, among whom were Rev. Samuel May and Gerrit Smith. May, who had charge of the Unitarian Society of Syracuse, was a rare combination of perfect courage and gentleness of spirit. Gerrit Smith, a great-hearted man, and

a deep thinker on moral and religious subjects, had early espoused the cause of the slaves.

"Under the lead of these two gentlemen, twenty or thirty resolute men determined to rescue the negro. Early in the evening they made an attack upon the police office and beat down the prison door with a battering ram; they encountered little resistance and easily overpowered the police without, however, inflicting any personal injury. They then led Jerry out, put him into a buggy drawn by a swift pair of horses and took him to a place of refuge in the city, where he remained concealed for several days, being finally sent safely through to Canada. Samuel May, Gerrit Smith and another gentleman united in a published acknowledgment to the effect that they had done all they could in the rescue of Jerry, that they were ready for trial and would give the court no trouble as to the fact, but would rest their defense upon the unconstitutionality and extreme wickedness of the Fugitive Slave Law."[1]

It is by such courageous and open violations of a law held to be wrong, not by evasion and concealment, that moral advance is made.

Cases which involve less important issues, but which at first sight are puzzling, may often be cleared by such a careful study of principles. A policeman is sent out to arrest a thief. When the thief sees his pursuer, he rushes down a side street and across a frozen river. Just as he is landing on the opposite side, he hears a crash in the ice and realises that the officer has fallen

[1] "History of the United States," J. F. Rhodes, vol. i. p. 224.

through. Turning back at once, the thief dives in and at the risk of his life, pulls the policeman out. Ought the officer at such a moment to arrest his rescuer or to let him go? His instinct is, of course, to reward so generous and devoted an act by setting the thief free, but further thought would lead him to the conclusion that this would be wrong. The policeman is not engaged as a judge of the law, but an executor of it. The fact that the thief is heroic does not undo the fact that he is a menace to property. The decision to let him go does not properly rest in the officer's hands. Having accepted a position under the city he is an instrument for the protection of society and bound to carry out its will. He has no right to let personal gratitude override his loyalty to his chosen purpose, which is to execute the law. He may, however, be present at the trial and convince the jury that they are dealing with a criminal who has greatly redeeming traits and he can afterwards help the offender by giving him a chance to live a self-respecting life.

### III

Cases such as this in which the right decision is relatively clear, slide imperceptibly into cases where custom allows the policeman to make his own decisions,—about arrests for drunkenness or for petty acts of disorder or violence among boys. Here in judging of right and wrong, we need to study the significance of custom. Custom is often spoken of as unwritten law,

and this is one of its striking distinctions. It is also unlike law in being enforced by no fixed penalty, though the vague punishment of social disapproval expressed by a look of scorn or the omission of an invitation is often more poignant than a heavy fine. Custom, because it is unembodied, changes more easily than law, and affects smaller groups. The sacred custom of one decade may be scorned by the next. A law has sway over a whole city, but there may be in the same space a dozen groups with differing customs. Yet as long as a custom lasts, it asserts itself as if it were all-embracing and ever-enduring. If it is the custom to wear shoes with pointed toes, custom insists that no one worth mentioning can wear broad toes, but once "mannish shoes" become the fashion, the same set looks down on the pinched toes with scorn. Besides such transitory customs as these, which, like mushrooms, no sooner flourish than they begin to decay, there are strongly rooted customs drawing their sustenance from deep and permanent instincts in human nature. Such are the customs of greetings at meeting or parting, the custom of presents on birthdays, of some external form of mourning for the dead.

In judging custom, we need first to recognise its significance and value. The sources of its value are chiefly these:

(a) Custom is a social habit and has the same sort of value as any other habit. To question every custom in which we are brought up, is like questioning every movement we make in eating or every word we use in speaking. Social custom, like personal habit, is a

steadying underpinning which may enable us to be more efficient in individual expression, because not obliged to question and reconstruct every fragment of our daily life.

(b) Custom holds many up to a standard which they would otherwise fall below. It is customary to provide for one's needy relatives, and the sense of social disapproval for neglect makes an additional motive to strengthen the sense of duty in this respect. Custom is a bulwark by which we are supported and kept from falling much below the standards around us, which may easily be higher than our own. We realise both the support and the restraint of social custom when we meet those *enfants terribles* who are without it, and who speak out brutally whatever is in their mind. The customs of polite society guard sensitive natures against many pricks and thorns.

It is, however, just the protecting character of social custom which makes it a danger if we accept it blindly. We need to think of ourselves as makers of custom as well as followers of it. We need to remember that the only true loyalty to the good we have received is to go beyond it, so that we may hand down to another generation, not the same good, but a better. It is a common custom, and one deplored by most good men, not to declare one's property. Such a custom, though not illegal, and though so fully recognised as not to be misleading, is very inconvenient and sometimes leads to an unfair taxation. It ought to be broken up, and can only be so by the organised effort of a resolute group.

The custom of late hours at dances is a bad one and often regretted by those who help to maintain it. To say that it is the custom and so unchangeable is to ignore the fact that any determined and tactful set of people or even one individual can modify custom. Without fresh consideration and deliberate effort, parties grow later and later. They tend to bring about the situation delightfully portrayed in Lewis Carroll's "Hunting of the Snark":

> "Its habit of getting up late, you'll agree
> That it carries too far, when I say
> That it frequently breakfasts at five-o'clock tea,
> And dines on the following day."

All important customs need fresh consideration. It used to be the custom of a well-to-do Boston family to feed all beggars who came to the door. One of the family decided that this was demoralising and broke up the custom, though for some months the impulse remained to feed the hungry applicants instead of sending them to more permanent help from the Associated Charities. On the other hand, a custom that seems injurious may be used for good ends. Paul Leicester Ford tells us in the "Hon. Peter Stirling" [2] how the latter used to frequent saloons against the wishes of his mother and against his own custom, because he found that in this way he could meet the men of his district intimately and in making them his friends, get from them and give to them the most efficient service.

Custom for any one of us represents the morality

[2] See pp. 90, 110 and 133.

of our special group along certain lines, and is good in so far as it holds us up to the average standard, bad in so far as we misuse it by accepting its decrees instead of doing our part to make them better.

One of the most striking effects of social custom is seen in the way it affects our sense of guilt. It is sometimes asked whether we can tell when we have done wrong by the feeling of shame. One of the strongest reasons that warns us not to judge sin in this way, is that our sense of social approval or disapproval is so strong that when we break away from custom, we often feel ashamed, though we know that we are conscientious; on the other hand we often are not ashamed of what is customary, even when we recognise it as wrong.

(1) We are ashamed sometimes of what we know is right when the people about us disapprove.[3] A young man who conscientiously refuses to smoke or drink may feel half-ashamed when his companions laugh at him for a weakling. A boy at school saying his prayers is ashamed of being called "Mammy's darling," although he may be absolutely conscientious. We are often ashamed of things which are not sinful, but simply slips or mistakes. The country girl, who comes to the city and is laughed at for mispronouncing a word or for tucking her napkin under her throat at dinner, feels dreadfully ashamed. To be dressed too little at an evening party, may give a feeling of embarrassment so close to shame that it is practically indistinguishable.

[3] "The Religious Aspects of Philosophy," Josiah Royce, pp. 53, 54.

We are afraid of the unaccustomed, though it may be right. Ten years ago during a walking trip in the Adirondack Mountains, all the women wisely wore short skirts. It was the only sensible dress, yet at that time it was so uncommon that it was hard not to feel shame when passing critical eyes.

(2) On the other hand we are sometimes not ashamed of things which we know are wrong, for sin tends to lessen sensitiveness. A man will avoid paying his fare in the horse-car, excusing himself by saying that the conductor did not ask him and that everyone does it. In such a case he will probably feel no shame. Many people tell so-called "white lies" and are not ashamed, unless they are found out. We keep our bureau drawers in a mess, while conscious that we ought to clear them up, but we only feel ashamed when one of our relations happens to open them. Yet if it was right to have them in confusion before we were found out, it was right afterwards.

Our consciences easily get hardened and cease to feel shame. Boys will write notes on their cuffs at examinations and boast of it, although they are more or less aware that it is wrong. In Dickens' "Oliver Twist," when poor little Oliver is among the gang of thieves, the boy who is known as the Artful Dodger tries to persuade him that it is right to steal.

"You've been brought up bad," said the Dodger, surveying his boots with much satisfaction when Oliver had polished them. "You'd better begin at once, for you'll come to the trade long before you think it, and you're only losing time, Oliver. If you don't take the

hankechers and watches, some other cove will, so the coves that lost them will be all the worse, and you will be all the worse too, and nobody a ha'penny worth the better, except the chaps wot gets them, and you've just as good a right to them as they have."

Since, then, we sometimes feel ashamed when we ought not to and do not feel ashamed when we ought to, shame is not a good test of sin, although the two often go together. As a cheap watch is sometimes right and sometimes wrong, now too slow and now to fast, so shame is sometimes aroused without due cause and sometimes slow to wake when we are guilty. But a watch which is sometimes wrong would be absolutely useless if we did not have other time-keepers by which to test it. We can set our watches by better ones or finally by the sun. So the sense of shame would be absolutely no test of guilt if we could not estimate sin by deeper, more thorough consideration. The question: Have I tried to put aside prejudice and to get the truth? gives a far more searching test of right-doing than the feeling of goodness or shame. If I can pass this more searching test then I ought not to feel ashamed.

## CHAPTER IX

## INTERESTS AS LIFE GIVERS AND LIFE SAVERS

### I

THREE persons are looking out of the same trolley car as it bowls along a public square. An outsider would say at once that these people are looking at the same objects; but if we know the individuals well we find that each sees something different and that the reason each sees differently is not on account of his eyes, but of his interests. In this chapter I shall try to show that we see with our interests, grow in moral force by our interests, are ourselves only because of our interests. Suppose that there are in the car an artist, a minister, and a lover of birds. The minister will at once see the church that borders one side of the square and the people who stream in; the artist, looking also at the church, will see the carving on the pillars and notice how finely the deep red of the Virginia creeper stands out against the sombre background of grey stone; the bird lover will miss all this in his joy of the discovery of a robin lingering late in the city. Each one of us who looks out on the world sees not what his retina reflects, but what interests him.

A man is essentially his interests. If you ask me to describe one of my friends I may tell you his weight and height and the colour of his eyes and hair. You will

then begin to know how he looks on the outside and perhaps you can recognise his figure as you might recognise my description of a yellow house bordering on a marsh without knowing who lived there, but you will really know *him*—the dweller therein—only by knowing what interests he has. I know a pair of twins whom the chance acquaintance finds indistinguishable one from the other. Yet really they are very different, for Harry is keenly interested in politics and is a great lover of society, while Tom seems to take no interest in anything but automobiles and watches. Any man of marked character is a man of marked interests. It was the keenness of his interest in the nation, in the triumph of righteousness, in his children, that made Lincoln the man he was. It was the strength of her love of human beings and her interest in restoring them to health that made Florence Nightingale what she was. These interests held her wherever she touched them, they drew her from afar.

As the magnet attracts iron and no other metal, so his special interest attracts each person. It is this engaging, holding power of any interest, which makes it the centre from which moral life radiates. We saw in the first chapter that while all who had interests of any kind were within the moral sphere, those who have no purpose or interest were morally neuter. If the student denies any interest in going to college it is useless for the instructor to tell him that he will fail in his examinations unless he studies. If a girl has no interest in the theatre the warning that if she wants to see Henry Irving act to-morrow she must

go to bed at nine to-night has no binding power. It holds her as little as the magnet holds a bit of tin.

If there were anyone totally without interests, that person would be as non-moral as an idiot. If incapable of acquiring any interest, he would actually be an idiot of the most hopeless type; there is nothing in such a nature to take hold of. Fortunately it is exceedingly rare that a person has no interest, but we all know the type of person before whom the marvellous variety of the world's interests pass as if unnoticed. "No, I am not interested in politics, I don't care for music, charities bore me, I have no use for athletics." Such a person is like a narrow alley between high walls; it is only for a few minutes of the many hours of the day that the darkness is lighted by the sun of some interest. A large part of the time such a person is hardly more alive than a barnacle which puts out its tentacles only when food comes near. At the other extreme we see a man whose nature is illumined by love of people, by interest in politics, in art, in nature, in science. Wherever that man goes he finds and he sends out radiance. A person without interests is like a plant without any leaves; inevitably it withers, for the sun only scorches it. To gain any interest is to put forth a new shoot which welcomes and absorbs energy from the sun.

II

So far I have not distinguished interest from its boon companion, purpose. Interest is like a seed; purpose, the root springing from the seed which

holds it firm and without which it will wither. So the myriad warm interests of the world which seek to find and sustain the germ of any dawning interest, may be compared to the soil continually formed by all seed. Without this soil made up by the growth of other seeds, no new seed can develop. An interest is the seed of a purpose and so of moral life. Where there is interest there is always hope, but unless the interest takes hold of the solid earth and roots itself in a purpose it soon withers into a liking.

This brings us to the important distinction between a wish, or a liking, and an interest. I may wish I had wings, I may like flattery; but it would sound queer to say that I had an interest in these things. Seriousness and earnestness are given in the very word interest. If a man has an interest he means business. The true interest commands you and yet is yours, it is loved yet feared, high above you and stretching off to eternity, yet near and familiar as the grass at your feet. In contrast with this a liking is passive, quiescent, luxurious, like a lap-dog. It is contemplative, dreamy, with a tendency to grow flabby from a want of exercise.

I may like your fine qualities when I see you and yet not be swallowed up by the desire for those qualities, or hunger and thirst for them as I must if I have an interest. We have only to indulge a liking not to fight to win it. It does not have, like interest, the necessity to break its chrysalis, the chrysalis of its past accomplishments and success, and to dart off afresh, growing strong by its own flight.

And yet, in spite of this contrast which I have tried to make as strong as I can, the two are very nearly related in human nature. A liking is usually a half-alive, half-conscious interest, not enough distinguished from present desire, but capable often of transformation without revolution into a genuine interest. Thus a liking for the woods may grow into an interest in beauty and in drawing or into an interest in natural history. A liking for gossip may develop into an interest in psychology; a liking for change into an interest in progress; a liking for day-dreaming into an interest in poetry; a liking for arguing into an interest in philosophy.

When, therefore, one makes any new moral investment, for example, the choice whether to be a lawyer or a doctor, to study painting or mathematics, the element of one's interest is always rightly to the fore. What interests me most I shall take hold of with most zeal and earnestness and I shall get most out of it because I shall throw myself most heartily into it. My interest develops into a purpose, however, only when it is strong and steady enough to hold over through times of drudgery and darkness, when it is strongly rooted and becomes an inseparable part of myself.

III

Because interests are the core of personality, which is moral life, to rouse an interest is to awaken moral life, and among all modern appliances none is so effective a life-saver as an interest. A large part of the

mean and seamy lives in the world owe their faults to the lack of real and permanent interest. There is no one of us who cannot call to mind some friend whose whole life has been reformed and converted by finding an interest. This experience is so common as to be almost commonplace. Men who in college have frittered away time, drifting into vices almost without resistance, occupied with the petty rivalries and jealousies of secret societies, tired of themselves and of others, a mush of languid tendencies without any leaven of principle or spirit,—it is common to see absolutely a miracle wrought in such men on going to a professional school by the possession of an interest in life. It must be seen to be believed, the way such a fellow will stiffen himself up, shake off parasitic habits and companions, and live a really noble life of devotion to the new master that has possessed him. So Grant, who was shiftless and intemperate until he had an interest sufficient to guide him, mounted under the stimulus of the war to a height of sober heroism that the nation cannot forget. With him it lasted after the immediate stimulus was gone. With many the war time was the only oasis of pure life in the desert of moral flabbiness out of which they came and into which they wandered back when the crisis which roused their interest was over.

Any interest whatsoever, good or bad, will cure a man of certain faults by leaving no time for them. A host of difficulties, weaknesses, and meannesses which beset the path of anyone lacking interests are nonexistent and conquered without special effort for him

by his forgetting them. We have said a good deal in a man's favour in saying that he has an interest, any interest whatsoever, for interests crush out sins and instil virtues. This is what makes part of the immense moral value of an interest in athletics—one of the easiest to acquire. In that province of interest the devotee learns what it feels like to act with others for ends beyond himself or to forget himself, sacrifice himself if need be, to the common good, the interest of the whole. He experiences these things and finds without any great sense of moral effort or heroism that they are natural and possible for him. Self-sacrifice, as preached to him at Sunday school, has seemed a thing for creatures unlike himself, for angels and martyrs. Now he finds how natural and necessary it is, how it is the law of life and success. He has heard of self-control and "mastery of his passions" and the words have sounded far away and feeble in his ears. There has been nothing to take hold of. Now he learns that an evil desire is to be driven out by a stronger good one and not by the unaided will or determination of the man in his closet. He learns the love of work, and the difference between work and drudgery. A few years before he would have laughed in the face of anyone who should tell him that he would ever come to love work; it would be like loving pain, he has thought. Now, before he knows it, he finds himself loving work, hardship, and difficulty. He tastes the joy of the struggle with worthy obstacles. He knows what seriousness and earnestness mean; he has, in the field of his interest, been as serious, as

earnest, as single-minded as the good people whose exhortations have had so little effect on him in earlier years. Once to taste these things, once to know what they are by personal experience, makes it impossible for him to go on living as before. He will always know what the higher life means.

Virtues are nothing in the world but natural parts or elements in the movement and life of that very live creature, an interest. They may have been torn away from their context and then given to us as copybook mottoes, but in any interested man's natural acts, they live, and move, and have their being. To carry out almost any interest, patience is needed. It is a part of good and skilful workmanship to have patience and perseverance, and any good workman unconsciously cultivates these virtues with an eye fixed not on them (they are dead things in themselves), but on the live interest in the work of which they are an element.

So it is with many other virtues, often and unwisely impressed on us as something to be sought after directly and for themselves. Take kindness: to make the motto of one's life "be kind" is as impractical as to advise anyone to "be quick"; but kindness and quickness are qualities soon found important by anyone who has a hard piece of work to do. "Good qualities" are like the separate notes in a piece of music, each necessary, but senseless except as parts of the tune. The tune in morals is an interest in something and there is nothing else in morals but this.

Examples of surprising yet deeply natural reform through the acquirement of an interest are found in

every field of work, and it may be a ribbon, a baby, a butterfly, an engine, which rouses the interest and sets free the pent-up life. Not long ago, at a summer school for poor children in Boston, there was a girl so stupid, so obstinate, and so indulged by a weak father, that her teachers felt hopeless about her. But in this school girls as well as the boys were taught carpentry, and this dull impassive girl woke up to an interest she had never felt before. She begged to come back after school hours to finish her wood-work; she took the greatest pains to do it well. She was gentle, obedient, industrious, and self-sacrificing, because she was so anxious to accomplish her work well.

Before long the interest began to spread. She became interested in cooking also, and even in drawing. Toward the end of the summer one of her teachers said to her: "Well, Margaret, have you experienced a change of heart?" She nodded her head and said: "Yes, I have." This is not an exceptional case, it is one of many exhilarating experiences which sustain and renew the hope of teachers everywhere. We see in all such cases the truth that we recognised in the first chapter, the truth that virtues grow on the same branch with interests because they are indeed the fruit of interest. It is easier now to see why this is so. Interests make up personality, and the good man is he whose interests are at work, whose whole power is expressed and increasing, and who is becoming thereby more and more of a person. Where there is interest there is hope.

The shadowy side of the truth that genuine inter-

ests bring virtues as bodyguards is the well-known fact that a lack of live, growing interests is accompanied by a disreputable crew of petty sins. How soon the people rocking idly on a hotel piazza drift into gossip, and half malicious criticism of their neighbours! It is because they have no persistent interests. The unoccupied invalid becomes self-centred and tyrannical. It is because he is cut off from the business that keenly interests him. A supervisor of schools asked the children in a grammar school whether boys or girls keep up a quarrel longer. "We boys can't keep on being mad," one of the boys answered, "because we want to play football together and you can't keep mad when you are playing football, but the girls haven't anything to do, so they keep on being mad a long time." A strong, active interest drives out brooding as a strong wind drives away fog. This is true in regard to all sins. The loyal citizen has no time to look in the glass and admire his personal appearance; the rich man who ardently loves his college cannot be ungenerous toward it. To be interested in anything is in the literal sense to be *in it;* it is to put your life into your work, and forget yourself in it; it means, therefore, a heat and vigour of activity that destroys flippancy, idleness, jealousy, morbidness, cowardice.

## IV

It is, then, the first of moral needs to have some interests. Are some subjects universally interesting and others hopelessly dry? At first sight it seems so, and

it is true that some subjects possess an almost instinctive interest to the majority of mankind. A runaway horse, a fire, a love story, a band of soldiers stir more people than a problem in algebra, an essay on compromise, or a case of agricultural implements. In the first group something is going on swiftly and we are carried with the current. To get into the current of the second group we must labour. The first set of experiences are like jewels flashing on the ground, the second like jewels which must be dug out of a mine. Yet far more true and important than the fact that some subjects are more quickly visible than are others, is the fact that no subjects are wholly or universally uninteresting.

If we ask ourselves what subjects are dull to us we shall inevitably find on our list those of which we know nothing or only the outer husk, and those which may be familiar in sound but into which we have put no work. Subjects badly taught at school seem ineffably dull, and ponderous books into which we have casually peeped we are sure have no marrow. Yet there is no single subject in the world that may not become of thrilling interest. One of the most striking features of the World's Fair, held at Chicago in 1893, was the almost bewildering variety of the exhibitions. It drove in upon one the vivid realisation that there is nothing that is not of supreme interest to someone and so nothing that may not become of supreme interest to you. We passed from Esquimaux to Patagonians, slid over forty centuries from cave dwellers to inventors of electric batteries, wandered

from humming birds to steam engines, from impressionist pictures to oil tanks, from geologic strata to the vitascope, from the Chinese theatre to the Symphony Orchestra, traced evolution in ships and engines as clearly as in animals and knew that everywhere among these extraordinary masses and mixtures, someone's keenest interest was represented. Everything in the Fair was real, personal, meaningful for someone or it would not have been there.

It may seem to some of us as if we had no strong interests. It is because we look too far off. We do not need to go far afield to seek interests. No one is so poor but that he has already more than one. First of all we find our warm love encircling the members of our family. They are so close to us that we hardly think of them as an interest, yet if we did it may be that we should plan more thoughtfully and steadily how best to help them. There may be a chance to help my sister by daily coaching, to understand the arithmetic which she finds so baffling, or to teach my younger brother to dance so that he will feel less awkward at parties. I may find, if I stop to notice, that my mother is over-tired by work which I can lessen, or that my father would really care to have me know enough of his business to be able to talk with him sympathetically.

I have spoken first of family ties, because they are common to all, but we shall also find in ourselves other interests varying widely in character and in strength. How shall we recognise these? When we are playing "hunt the thimble" and similar games, the pianist indicates the nearness of any seeker to the

thimble by playing louder, and finally, when he almost touches it, there is a pæan of sound. The seeker knows by the warmth of the music that he is near the hidden prize. It is somewhat in this way that we recognise the dawning of our interests. When certain subjects are touched upon, or we are asked to join certain enterprises, we feel warmed, kindled, while others leave us relatively cold and indifferent. These warm spots are the starting points from which our journey into deeper and more wide-reaching purposes naturally begins.

I know a boy who had a strong taste for making toy engines and ploughs. His ardour and perseverance all seemed to go into this play (although it was more strictly his work) over these inventions, and his studies were neglected. Before very long, however, I found him engrossed in an algebra lesson. "It is hard work to study algebra, isn't it?" I asked. "Yes," he replied; "but you must know about it if you are going to make 'works.'" He had decided that mathematics was necessary to future inventions on which he has set his heart, and the once cold and intolerable lesson is now warmed by its linkage with his ardent interest.

## V

It does not matter how an interest begins nor in what field it starts. As it flows onward it draws to itself what seemed foreign and leads its possessor into wide and permanent happiness. "As the bees in swarming cling to one another in layers till the few are

reached whose feet grapple the bough from which the swarm depends, so with the objects of our thinking, they hang to each other by associated links, but the original source of interest in all of them is the native interest which the earliest one once possessed." [1]

Earlier in this chapter I said that an unrooted interest inevitably withers and that the roots of interest grow only by thorough, persistent work. It is an experience as common as sunset, yet equally irradiated with fresh glory, that any work of which we take firm hold will before long take hold of us. What we put into it in energy and patience we shall get out of it in the newness of life. Without work no interest can permanently live, and the test of interest is the readiness to work. If my interest in Harvard University does not become a purpose to help its career, it soon becomes flabby and sentimental. On the other hand, even a weak-kneed interest becomes stronger and more enduring when we work over it. If the philanthropist can once rouse a man or woman to teach one of the classes in his settlement, or to visit some poor family; if the manager of a fair can once persuade you to make articles for her table, the battle is won. Languid as your interest may be at first, you will soon find yourself beginning to be identified with the work and anxious for its fulfilment.

There is nothing in the world permanently and universally uninteresting, nothing which may not at any moment flash into brilliancy or glow with a steadily increasing light. The things we think dull may at any

[1] "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," Wm. James, p. 99.

time become absorbing. Nothing is dull but our ears and eyes.

But if it is true that everything is of interest, shall we say that any interest is as good as any other? If not, what are the characteristics of the best interests? It seems to me that the answer is this: Any interest is better than none, but the best interests for anyone are those that he can make the most of.

It is very common for girls and boys from eight to twelve years to take a keen interest in collecting postage-stamps of different countries and denominations. This is often an absorbing interest for some months or years and may accomplish much good. It may keep a boy happily occupied and give him his first insight into the steady joy of doing anything hard and thoroughly; it may train precision and help him to overcome laziness or timidity. It may lead to the beginning of acquaintance with other boys which will ripen into friendship, it may train his taste in colour, it may help him to be observant of small differences among the stamps and lead to the acquirement of a good deal of useful knowledge. It may open out into an interest in geography, history, language and the character of the people of various nations, and so far outsoar its original limits.

As a rule, however, an interest in stamp-collecting does not last. The interest which begins vividly dies out or is transformed to some more fruitful soil. The larger the collection and the more easily it is obtained the less it is likely to interest permanently. Anything of which we can obtain the whole in a

relatively short time ceases to interest, and a complete collection soon becomes a dull affair unless we have a new person to whom to show it. Repetition palls, and we want new difficulties to conquer. This is why even in games like golf, which are chosen for amusement, we must have harder and harder hazards and bunkers if our interest is to last.

Again, gifts pall, and only what we win is luminous. This is one of the reasons why the everyday work of the world based on the necessity of bread-winning becomes in many cases the worker's most enduring interest. We have spoken hitherto as if most of us chose our interests from a wide range, but the majority of the world finds its interests in occupations not freely chosen, but in part forced by the immediate need of money. Yet because the man throws himself into his work, it, too, becomes a life-giving interest; and only when work is inhumanly narrow, automatic or repugnant does it often fail to arouse interest.

In our comparison of different interests so far we have found that any keen interest does more to develop character than the most ideal pursuit chosen apart from interest. A live interest in football is more valuable than a languid one in literature or in philanthropy. There are many men who can rouse only a pumped-up interest in literature, an interest which will flag and collapse when left to itself. These same men will catch fire early and burn fiercely with ever-increasing heat over football, and the heat will spread and open out this great world to them as nothing else can do at that time of life. The same men ten years

later are not likely to find that an interest in football satisfies them. But if one has kept loyal to what football has taught him, he will find more fruitful, and so more absorbing, ways to use his power. Football trained in him the courage to go ahead in spite of danger when a rush was to be made; he will find a stronger courage needed in the more intricate game of purifying politics. Football trained him in loyalty to team-play; he will find more engrossing and enduring opportunity in loyalty to his city or his nation. His interest in football will have burst its chrysalis and become an interest in the growth of his town. Here he finds a continuity that was not possible in the separate games of football, a far richer relationship to men, and as the years go on an increasing scope of activity instead of a lessening one. He still may call his work in politics a game as he thinks with affection of the devotion and single-mindedness of any good game, but it is one which calls out his power in a more satisfying way.

# CHAPTER X

## THE CHOICE OF INTERESTS

### I

Interests are the kernel of moral life, and the best for each of us are those which nourish us most. This is the outcome of the last chapter. If there were a bag full of unexceptional interests (for example, in music, charity, navigation, cooking, cotton-growing), and we each drew one out from the bag by chance and had to cultivate the particular interest we pulled out, all would go badly. When we imagine Emerson, an awkward, retiring philosopher full of delicate thoughts, set to rule America, and a sturdy soldier like Ulysses S. Grant doomed to write on the Oversoul, it is evident that the fruitfulness of interests is dependent on their fitness to their owner. It would be far less disastrous to wear one another's clothes than to flop about in or pinch ourselves into another's misfit interests.

Yet there is after all much that is common even to interests that look far apart, and such interests grow to have more and more in common as we penetrate deeper into them. Any genuine interest, whether in soap-making or Pueblo relics, in improved pavements, in sculpture, or in your family, is always the same kind of attitude. Anyone who knows what it is to be interested in a so-called impersonal object knows that

there is nothing warmer or more vivid, nothing to which a man can more readily sacrifice himself or in which he can become more thoroughly engrossed. Darwin [1] tells a story of himself which illustrates this:

"No pursuit at Cambridge was followed with nearly so much eagerness or gave me so much pleasure as collecting beetles. It was the mere passion for collecting, for I did not dissect them and rarely compared their external characteristics with published descriptions, but got them named anyhow. I will give a proof of my zeal. One day, on tearing off some old bark, I saw two new kinds of beetles and seized one in each hand; then I saw a third and new kind which I could not bear to lose, so that I popped the one I held in my right hand into my mouth. Alas! it ejected some intensely acid fluid which burned my tongue so that I was forced to spit out the beetle, which was lost, as was also the third one."

Darwin does not feel any great difference between interest in people and in things, for in the same letter he can speak of "my beloved barnacles," and then a little lower of "my beloved Dr. Gully."

Any strong interest is warm, intimate, cherished, while also broad in outlook and reasonable in attitude. A scientific man gets to have exactly the feeling for his laboratory that the artist has for his studio and his studies. It is all his own, familiar and warm; all around him is the fruit of his labour and the invitation to further devotion. The mother's pride or

[1] "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," by Francis Darwin, vol. i. p. 43.

disappointment in her children is no more personal a feeling than the artist's or scientist's feeling about what he has helped to bring into being. It is part and parcel of him in the same way; it is his special field for service and the exercise of his powers, the place that needs him as the mother feels that her children need her.

She does not think of bringing up her children for someone else and love them merely for the use they will be to the world. They are hers, express her ideal and are loved as such, whether the world ever appreciates them or knows of their service. So the artist loves his pictures and the investigator his researches for themselves, because they are his and express his ideals, and only casually and secondarily thinks of their market value. They are as human and personal interests as any, for interests are always the same in attitude, however they differ in their objects. There is only one true moral attitude. It is attained in artistic devotion and called by its devotees the artistic or impersonal attitude, equally attained in devotion to people and called by its devotees the personal attitude.

II

All interests, then, have much in common, but for convenience in looking at them we can classify them under four heads.

(1) Interest in art or creation of the new.

(2) Interest in care-taking or in protecting and freeing the undeveloped.

(3) Interest in science or in advancing the boundaries of knowledge.

(4) Interest in execution or putting knowledge into use.

Each of these interests may have world-wide or chamber-wide manifestations.

(1) When we think of art we are apt to look high to the world of Velasquez or Beethoven, but the art interest and impulse is also present in anyone who loves to arrange flowers or trim a hat.

(2) The great care-takers of the world have been women like Florence Nightingale or Clara Barton, or men like Father Damien, but the protecting impulse is present wherever any child loves to take care of a baby brother or to nurse a sick plant.

(3) Great scientists like Darwin or Pasteur are rare, but the same interest is present in anyone who searches to discover for himself all the butterflies of his village.

(4) Morgan or Cecil Rhodes typify to us the power and interest of putting knowledge into use by organisation and system, but the girl who takes an interest in doing the marketing well is moved by a similar impulse. It is true of course that these interests overlap and no great work is done without the interplay of several of them. The great artist must have executive ability and love of truth; a life-saver, like Clara Barton, must have marked executive power to carry through her work, and Rhodes could not carry out his great schemes without creative imagination and keen sympathy with men. Nevertheless, interest of one kind is apt to preponderate and is suggestive in leading to the right choice of work.

Let us compare some cases of these types of interest, taking first a scientist and a philanthropist. Charles Darwin stands out as the greatest scientist of the nineteenth century. If we compare his work with that of Dorothea Dix, who at about the same time was engaged in reforming prisons and asylums, it seems at first as though her work was more truly worth while because in it she served humanity, while he was but a "pale acolyte of science." But on closer examination we shall find that there is a vast amount in common between the work of Dorothea Dix and Charles Darwin, and we shall find it hard to say that her work was one whit more serviceable to mankind than his, or that either work was nobler, any more than the flute is more important than the oboe in an orchestral composition which requires both.

Darwin's work was that for which he was best fitted, both mentally and physically. Too much of an invalid to lead a strenuous life, there was almost no time in which he could not quietly and intently follow some experiment among his earth worms or water-soaked seeds. While he was thus engaged, Dorothea Dix literally struck off the chains from wretchedly abused insane men and women and gave the despairing prisoner hope. In this view her work seems of far greater service than his, yet knowledge of evolution has helped the wretched and given hope to the imprisoned. It is largely because of what the theory of evolution has brought before us that we no longer give clothes indiscriminately to beggars.

(a) The wide application of Darwin's evolutionary

theories has made us realise that plants, animals and men may become helpless parasites if they are supported and not obliged to help themselves. There is a little amœba called Sacculina, whose ancestors once had legs and could move about and feed themselves. It climbed on to another kind of amœba and attached itself firmly there. Its power of movement and self-support vanished and now it is only a sucking mouth. The application of evolutionary principles shows us that this holds true of a tramp. He deliberately lives on society, begs or loafs in the sun all day and drifts every night into a barn or a Wayfarer's Lodge.

The study of the significance of evolution teaches us to have work at the Wayfarer's Lodge to make the tramp earn his living and so perhaps to extricate him from his parasitic existence.

(b) Again, evolution teaches us to be more charitable toward the poor by proving to us that men's vices are often the result of inheritance and poor surroundings, just as a plant springs up diseased and stunted in a dry and barren soil. Through this experience we learn that if we give our poor better dwellings, more sun and air, more quiet and privacy, they will gain in character. We see also that a life which is full of temptation and resists even a part of it may be greater than the unexposed life which is innocent.

(c) If we turn again to the work of Dorothea Dix we see further points of likeness to that of Darwin. She supplied a more direct and pressing need than he, but she also worked out a new principle of treatment for the insane, that of treating them as sick and

in need of rest, nourishment and gentleness instead of as possessed by demons and needing to be controlled. No special work can be so far reaching as that which evolves a new principle. Darwin and Miss Dix alike sought a new principle, though she worked first to redress immediate crying needs and he first for the slowly won enlightening truth.

(d) Was either work greater because it required more of the worker? No. Each was fitted for just that work and served it with entire devotion. Miss Dix's work took rare courage. She had to face a narrow and blind opposition and to face it with unflinching patience for years. So did Darwin, for both were pioneers, and Darwin had a far more sensitive temperament than Dorothea Dix. It seems at first sight far less courageous to write quietly in one's study than to face adverse legislatures and indignant jailors, yet Darwin's courage was called for to the utmost. He had to express and uphold views that hurt and shocked his best friends and his honoured teachers. When he first became convinced that each species came from lower forms instead of being separately created, he wrote: "I feel as if I were confessing a murder."

Darwin's work, like that of Dorothea Dix, called for inexhaustible patience. He collected such a mass of facts that he said at one time that it would take him at least a year merely to sort and arrange them. He worked for eighteen years, often amid baffling puzzles, before he thought it right to publish any statement of his ideas. The same patience which Dorthea Dix required to carry through reforms opposed by the inert

and conservative, he needed to open the jails of narrow conservative thought and set truth free. The work of each was greatly needed and was done with the utmost conscientiousness. Neither work can be called the nobler.

Nor is it easy to say which helped the world the more. Both were right, because both chose the work which roused and set free their full power, not because one directly served persons and the other science.

We can draw other illustrations from about the same period and study the choice of interests made by an artist and an organiser of men, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Robert G. Shaw. Emerson, while never a vehement abolitionist, was a strong believer in freedom. He went so far as to say that when fugitive slaves were escaping to the North, every house should be built with a hiding place. When the slavery question was most urgent he was for a time uncertain whether it was not his duty to give all his strength to the cause of the Abolitionists. In his private journal he writes in 1852:[2] "I waked last night and bemoaned myself because I had not thrown myself into this deplorable question of slavery, which seems to want nothing so much as a few assured voices. But then, in hours of sanity, I recover myself, and say, God must govern His own world, and knows His way out of this pit without my desertion of my post, which has none to guard it but me. I have quite other slaves to free than those negroes, to wit: imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts, far back in the brain of man, far retired in the heaven of invention, and which, important to the

[2] "Emerson in Concord," by Edward W. Emerson, p. 78.

republic of man, have no watchman or lover or defender but I."

In this decision of Emerson's we can see the right principles of any choice. Each of us must free those imprisoned spirits whom we really can free. Had Emerson tried to work directly for people, for example to visit poor families, he would probably have failed to help them to anything like the extent to which his writings have helped his readers. Spurred by the truth which he proclaims so urgently, and so delicately, that each of us should respond to his unique opportunity, Emerson's readers are even now doing work among the poor and sick with a zeal and a steadiness due largely to his teaching. He has helped to free those who will set others free. Had he abandoned the imprisoned thoughts which no one but he could unchain, the army would have been the richer but by one man in the wrong place. His was an artistic, a creative, not an executive, interest.

At nearly the same time that Emerson decided not to enlist, another Massachusetts citizen faced what looked like a similar decision, and came to the opposite conclusion. Robert Gould Shaw was one of the many Harvard graduates who enlisted at the first call of President Lincoln. Toward the end of the war the plan of organising regiments of negroes was tried, and the command of one of these regiments was offered to Shaw. It was a task made doubly hard by the uncertainty of the discipline and courage of untried negro soldiers, by the natural abhorrence of the South toward regiments of their own escaped slaves, and by the

almost certain death to which the commander of such a regiment was exposed. To Shaw it was harder because at this time he was on the eve of marriage. For two or three days he hesitated, and even sent a message through his father to Governor Andrew that he could not accept because he was not equal to the task. But before his father had time to deliver the message Robert Shaw telegraphed him to withdraw it —he had decided to go. He wrote to his family that he thought he had decided rightly. "While I was undecided I had the feeling as if I were cowardly," he said.[3]

He was killed at the disastrous assault on Fort Wagner and his body was thrown into the trench among the negroes. Yet his choice was right. He would not have been Robert Shaw had he refused the command. He would have felt all his life the disgrace of the refusal. He owed it to his country, to himself and to his wife to go. He would not have been worthy of his heroic mother and wife, not truly the man they loved had he been unwilling to give his life to his country. He chose as all must choose, by deciding what called into activity his fullest power and thereby met the greatest need.

So far we have considered typical interests: science, philanthropy, literature, and leadership. Decisions between the claims of two strong interests meet us at every turn and make the difficulty and the zest of living. Let us take one more case which illustrates the choice between art and care-taking. Ought anyone who has a marked talent for or love of music to put it aside in order to work among the poor?

[3] "Harvard Memorial Biographies," v. ii. p. 203.

Such cases come into our experience every month. I heard lately of a young girl who has a wonderful alto voice. So beautiful and strong is it and so dramatic her expression that a well-known manager offered to take her on a starring tour with Patti. Her love of music had been strong enough to lead her to refuse all other allurements and her one occupation outside of her music was devotion to an invalid mother. Yet when she received this unusually encouraging offer of an important place in a successful opera company she refused it at once and without consulting anyone.

People are sure to differ about such a problem. To one the loss to the world of an enchanting voice and to the girl of the outlet for her power will be most vivid, to another the loyalty to a deep-rooted tie. In such a case, when the opinions of equally sincere and honourable people differ, what should decide the matter? Only, I believe, the deepest, most characteristic want of the girl herself, in view of all the facts on both sides. She was perhaps wrong to decide impulsively and without advice, but the final test must be this: To which life does her love go out most strongly? Hitherto she had not been obliged to face the alternative. Now she must choose, and she may rightly decide either way, but if her choice is right, it will be so because she chose the work which is most herself. If she decides that her main part in the world is personal devotion, she ought to do this in as thorough, open, loyal a way as any professional work.

The choice of interests is, when carefully viewed, as

wide as the number of those who choose them, but all interests should be served with the spirit of devotion which will not tolerate blindness, thoughtlessness or irresolution. Whether our calling is to search for an antitoxin for scarlet fever or to nurse a sick mother, it calls for equal intelligence and thoroughness. The choice should be made clearly, prayerfully, not by drifting into the work because it is near at hand. It is easy in either work to have all our time taken up or rather broken up by constant interruptions. If we find that this is so, we need to think freshly whether the work we have chosen is our best work. If it is, we ought to learn to resist unnecessary interruptions and to carry on our task gladly because the work gives us life and ungrudgingly because there is always time for what we put first. We need to study and watch experts in our line of work, and so to guard against mistakes. The scientist who is deaf to the experience of others wastes much time, and those whose delicate task it is really to help any living being will need all the experience they can win from others.

We have seen how much all genuine interests have in common.

(1) All interests have to their possessor the same warmth.

(2) All interests are served in the same spirit of thorough devotion.

(3) All interests widen their possessor.

(4) All interests serve a real need, *i. e.*, are rational.

(5) All interests call out that latent power of full life which is virtue.

All genuine interests are needed and it is best that they should be carried on by those whose heat of affection melts away every difficulty. In many cases the scientists or artists, working largely in solitude and without direct relation to people, furnish the resources which will later enable the care-takers and the organisers to do their work, just as the quiet, untended wheatfields of the West make possible the nourishment and employment of thousands when the time of ripening comes. Neither the planting and time of growth, nor the harvest can be spared in man's economy, nor can we say which is the more worth while or the more serviceable. If Raphael had spent his life in healing the sick the world would never have seen the life-giving face of the Sistine Madonna. If Columbus had devoted himself to the poor, myriads of the immigrants who now throng to and cultivate our western farms would have starved.

This is equally true of less far-reaching work. Whenever we turn away from our special work to dabble or toil in places where we do not belong we are leaving undone what ought to be done. I said at the outset that the deeper we penetrated into any interest the more we should find it opening out into other types of interest. It is as if we all started from the outside of a circle and penetrated inward toward the centre. At the outset, philanthropy, social life, home duties seem to concern persons, and literature, business and law to touch persons far less. The farther we go the closer will our interests become and the harder will it be to keep the divisions separate.

Sixty years ago there lived in Brunswick, Maine, a woman who used each available moment of freedom to write a few words of a story. Was she working for others? We can only know when we find that it was Mrs. Stowe writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the book which did most to break the chains of slavery. Had she helped individuals all her life she could never have wrought so deeply for the good of all. Any thorough, wide-wake work is sure to call on all sides of a man's nature, and in so doing to bring him closer to all other workers. There is no need to choose any work just because others are doing it, for by choosing the work for which we are fitted we shall find even greater bonds of sympathy.

III

If, however, it is true that we ought each to choose the work that interests us most, how shall we recognise such work? A few people have a strong, inborn talent which has steadily grown with their growth; for them the choice is relatively clear. Most of us find out our interests by trying several among the most promising and watching the effect. In a group of eight girls in one of my classes there were as many interests, and the interest which roused one would leave the others relatively cold. One was a warm-hearted girl, devoted to children. It seemed clear that she would find her best work in studying kindergarten, and through that she could find her way farther. One was a lover of the country, and in spite of the open scorn of her cockney friend, she resolved that her work should be

on a farm. The city-loving friend was herself an ardent musician, and chose violin-playing for her life work. She hoped to join a women's orchestra as soon as she left school. A fourth became eager at the thought of cooking and household economics, and planned to go to an industrial college for further training. The fifth, a devoted Roman Catholic, had a glimpse of what might lead to an opening for good work in the service of her church. The sixth wanted to work in charities, but had no specific direction; the seventh and eighth wavered between several slight interests which were not yet fully developed or constant. It is more than likely that in the course of ten years these girls will have altered their decisions. If they have changed or if they have persevered wisely, it will be because they have tested their interests faithfully and observantly by something like the following tests:

(1) Does it rouse and warm me?
(2) Does it overflow into other interests?
(3) Does it call out the best in me?
(4) Does it seem to serve a real need?
(5) Is it progressive and fruitful?

It is only by the person himself, or by someone who knows him as well or better than he knows himself, that these questions can be truly answered. It is fortunate for the world that there is such a wide variety of interests, and that subjects which bore me arouse you. Few of us would care to write a dictionary, yet it was a work of great interest to Johnson; few of us would have the patience to work eighteen years in

experimenting to prove the theory of evolution, yet in it Darwin found his life. We saw in an earlier chapter that we could not judge the goodness of any act by sight; we can now add that we cannot judge the goodness of any interest until we fully share it.

There has been at times a tendency to condemn any interest in which, by the nature of the case, many cannot share. In contradiction to this view, it is evident that in all pioneer work we must be nearly alone, and that it can never be surely foretold of any work while in the pioneer stage whether or not it will run up a blind alley. Any tendency to discourage an interest because it is solitary is likely to result in stagnation.

Any interest that is human or rational is social in the deepest and most important sense, and the tendency to be scared out of our deepest interests by the opposition or indifference of those around us is a real and common danger. Interests taken up because people are now awake to them would lose their motive and their reason for existence with the fickle popular whim. But an interest taken up because we feel it ours and know that it has not been chosen on account of any prejudice or whim in us, is social because it is serving a cause which we have reason to believe is everybody's cause, and the result of which will accrue to all sooner or later.

To return, in conclusion, to the application of the positive criterion which we have tried to lay down: How are we to know our interests from our whims? By making sure we are interested, which is best done by trying the interest.

## CHAPTER XI

## EFFORT, SACRIFICE, AND DRUDGERY

### I

If we could go back to the New England of three hundred years ago, we should find a standard of duty very different from that set forth in the chapters on interest. To do your duty, the Puritan forefathers held, is to do what is repugnant and hard just because it ought to be done, and there was an implication that the disagreeableness made the act more virtuous, just as people then thought that the bitterer and more repugnant the taste of any herb, the more virtue it had to cure disease.

Have we swung to the opposite extreme? Is it virtue to do what you like most because you like it, and is the pleasantness to taste a test of power to save? Surely not. Both these extremes are but half truths; the choice is never between repugnant duty and frivolous pleasure seeking.

The ascetics and the Puritans made this great mistake. They thought that duty was doing what is hard and what you *hate*. The truth is that duty is doing what is hard and what you love. Dorothea Dix loved her work and found much of it hard. Darwin's work was at times so wearing that he feared he might not live to publish his first book. Father Damien knew that his mission involved almost certain death, but all

three loved their work, and that was why its hardship was welcomed and the rocky soil made to yield harvests of character as well as of sacrifice.

On the other hand, when Schiller, who loved poetry with all his heart, was forced by his father to practise surgery, the work was hard and also wrong. Sensitive and unfitted for the work, Schiller suffered intensely, and until he abandoned surgery and turned to literature his nature was starved. To use Schiller as a surgeon was like using a razor as a chisel. The hated work wore away his power through friction.

If it is true, as I have tried to prove, that the best work for anyone is that to which his love goes forth most ardently and steadily, it might seem to follow that sacrifice and strenuous effort would be eliminated from the best lives. We have already seen that this is not so; the boy who has a kindling interest in carpentry or football will work harder over it and sacrifice more for it than his plodding and docile neighbour. His interest makes him aglow with a heat which burns through difficulties which dampen the well-meaning but unaroused; his keenness of interest makes possible the sacrifices which are always involved in winning against stubborn difficulties. If we consider *why* the pursuit of interest demands effort and sacrifice, we find the answer in the nature of moral life which always means choice and growth, and so involves that the easy and finished shall be thrust aside continually for the untried and uncertain, and that much we love shall be rejected for the sake of what we love more, as we lop off some of the branches of a tree to strengthen the main trunk.

A person of fixed habits who leads an unprogressive life, sacrifices nothing. He makes a comfortable programme for himself and sticks to it. I know a man who goes every morning to play whist at his club, takes a good lunch, goes to a concert or for a walk, smokes his cigar and plays whist again. He has all the money he needs and he makes no sacrifice, but he grows no more than a rose-bush in winter.

Anyone who is growing sees on all sides opportunities which bear within them the fertile germs of new life to be won only by effort and sacrifice. There is among my friends a man of large fortune, whose sympathy is so vivid that he limits rigidly his personal expenses in order to be freer to express himself as a citizen. During his investigation of the conditions of city life he found that even where playgrounds abound they are not adequately used, and, by careful study and observation, he came to the conclusion that it was because there was no leader to organise games and keep the younger boys from persecution by older ones. He at once secured permission to put up at his own expense a fine equipment for climbing, sliding and jumping. He engaged instructors to encourage the boys, to organise baseball, football and hockey teams in their seasons, and to protect the use of the ground against monopoly. When this work was efficiently done, he could not rest on his laurels. The question of the relation of the playground to the schools arose and must be carefully worked out, and when once the boys have been satisfactorily provided for, the corresponding but distinctly different question arises for the girls. They

do not want the same forms of amusement which best express the boys. If the playground is to appeal to them, it must have gardens and handiwork, as well as games of basketball. The little children next demand attention, and the parents whose lives are often meagre and deadening.

There is no limit to the opportunities which open to the growing man and demand his keenest thought, his untiring energy, his daily sacrifice of what once he prized. At first sight we might think that a rich man could do much good without sacrifice. This is but a distant view, which dissolves as we look at his work with the illuminating telescope of appreciation. Like all growing men, he must do without much he would prize for the sake of an outgoing life. Moral life is always in motion and involves doing new hard things. Everything we do a second time is different, both because we are different from having done it before and because it is different from having been done before.

II

The degrees of sacrifice in growth differ very largely. Some people seem to grow in straight lines, as it were, and for them the past is included in the present. If a man cares only for engineering or only for football, there is comparatively little need for sacrifice on his part. He has only to seek the best technical school or to join the strongest team, and the sacrifices of time, or health, or society which he must make in order to do

this are so easy to him that they are hardly sacrifices. It is people of wide sympathies and varied tastes who are continually confronted with the question of what to sacrifice. When anyone loves not only engineering, but music and painting, politics and philosophy, the theatre and parties, on what principle can he decide which is right to give up? We can only tell by thorough knowledge of the man and of his central, most characteristic interest. Let us test this by a simple example:

I am going up the Matterhorn; I should like a flask of water, a loaf of bread, a slice of beefsteak, a fur coat, a telescope, a mirror to flash with, a rope, spiked boots, an axe, and a photographic camera. All these things are highly desirable, but as I happen not to be an Atlas or a Samson, I simply cannot take them all. Which, then, do I take? Not those which include the others, they are not so comparable, but those which are most essential to my purpose in climbing the Matterhorn. This is always the criterion. I must have spiked boots, some food, an axe, and a rope in order to go up at all. Is it best to be cold and hungry for the sake of my telescope, or to do without that and ensure my comfort? The two are different; on what principle am I, who have both desires, to say which is best? We often try to decide by asking ourselves which is right and going over and over this question in the same form without trying to see what exactly it is we want to know and what is the meaning of our question. Of course we do want "the right," but what the right *means* as concerns this particular decision we find only by changing the ques-

tion a little and finding out what is our main object in going.

The question of right sacrifice depends wholly on purpose. If I am simply a mountain-climber, I shall do well to leave behind all except what is necessary to comfort and safety. If I am a member of a rescue party, the rope becomes essential, the photographs should be abandoned. If I am an astronomer, engaged to examine the stars from that mountain-top, my bulky telescope must go at all costs. If I am first of all a photographer to whom the pictures of these peaks and glaciers are priceless, I shall sacrifice even comfort to success in photography. It is in this way alone that we can tell whether any sacrifice is right.

Let us take a harder case. I am an artist and care very much about my work. Is it right for me ever to marry? Two main questions confront me at once. First, can I keep up my art as fully if I marry? and if not, secondly, what is my deepest life? I think it over It is impossible, I decide, for me to carry on my career as an artist as fully and freely when married as now. At present I am free from the responsibility of managing a home and servants or of devoting myself to my husband. My time is my own and my interest is concentrated on one thing. Whereas if I marry, the responsibilities of that life, and the care of my children, if I have any, make it necessary to put the family life first, and deliberately to subordinate my art. On the other hand, I think of what married life will mean and what its opportunities are. May it not be my best purpose to found a home, to join my life to another life

that we may each add whatever is strong in us to the other and so double each other's power; may it not be that the bringing up of my children is my best work?

We cannot decide any such question without knowing much more—for example, the value of my paintings to me and to the world, my capacity for married life—in short, without knowing my character and my interests. But if I rightly marry, instead of studying art, it is because marriage is more essential to my central purpose. The love of art still presses its claims, but the first place is refused to it because it is not essential to or compatible with the central purpose which I now embrace. I do not say, "The care of children is a higher work than the painting of pictures." I only say, "My career as an artist would not be for me so good, so enriching and so fruitful as a married life. Marriage is for me gain and growth in spite of the fact that for it I have sacrificed society and art." How do I know it is growth? Because it fulfils more the purpose which is and has been the purpose underlying my study of history and art and kindergarten. I feel now that when I dabbled in art it was as if I ran errands while the capacity lay dormant in me of commanding an army. Marriage does not include the exercise of all the activities and interests of art. On the contrary, it rules out some of the activities which are real and good for me, but it satisfies and calls out a larger part of my nature. It is better that my artistic craving should starve than that I should give up marrying, because without marriage the most vital part of my nature is cramped and unexpressed. Once art

satisfied me, but in growing I became conscious of more essential needs in my nature, or rather the old needs unfolded into new meaning. Much in married life may be hard or irksome to me, but I know it is *my* life and fulfils my purpose better than art. For another person the case might be just the reverse. Each is his own judge.

"And truly it demands something god-like in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law to himself, that a single purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity to the other." [1]

Every moral decision depends on purpose, and each is unique. To make any moral decision, we need to know what want is most characteristic of our nature as a whole; this we discover chiefly by realising and making clear to ourselves what cause we have already invested in, what course we are even now pursuing. We are never in the position of a man with his money in hand ready to invest for the first time. We have always invested already, and the question is always, where is our property now? What have I started to do? With which of my outstanding interests shall I identify myself? The answer to these questions we find only as we burrow back behind both seemingly conflicting purposes to the one self represented in both. I want marriage and I want to study painting, but I cannot (when I really face the question)

[1] Emerson, "Self Reliance."

want both if they are incompatible. If I did I should be so torn by conflicting desires as to be more like two people than one. If I am one self, then that self must find a common element, myself, in both purposes, and if I choose one, it must be because it has more of the common element than the other, and in this sense, and this only, includes the other.

Moral decisions often look a good deal like the question whether you will have $^{8}/_{9}$ or $^{17}/_{19}$. Child-like, we often reply that we want both, ignoring the prohibitory "whether." Both would be the ideal, but our most complete satisfaction is physically impossible. We must take what is attainable or lose all. It is then morally right to sacrifice one alternative, but only after a long patient struggle to find some way to get both; a struggle a man would never make if he were not sure that the *highest* is the most inclusive. But even when we decide that to have both is impossible, we need to know which it is best to have, $^{8}/_{9}$ or $^{17}/_{19}$. It is not easy to tell, but the best way is, of course, to find a common denominator (the self), and then the comparison is simple, as they are in common terms. Between $^{152}/_{171}$ and $^{153}/_{171}$ there is no difficulty in choosing.

A good sacrifice is then one which satisfies the larger or more characteristic part of our nature, as good pruning enables the tree as a whole to bear more fruit. A wrong sacrifice is one in which the more central or important work is given up for the less, as when Schiller, who was born a poet, wears himself away in the friction of a hated profession,—surgery, or, as one

of my pupils suggested, when the best parlour is sacrificed to the use and abuse of cats, who would be as happy in the barn.

III

If all sacrifice is of that to which we are less attached for that which is more central in our lives, it follows that no sacrifice ought to be absolute. It is true that men like Father Damien or Robert Shaw go out on their chosen path knowing almost certainly that it is the road to physical death, but to catch sight of the light on their faces is to know that "they lose their life to save it." That with which they are identified transcends death and if, as they are assured, the only road to that life which is truly their life, lies through death, they go toward it with steady feet. They are one with that which is greater than death, greater even than the death of visible failure. It was part of the tragedy of Robert Shaw's death that the occasion of it was unnecessary. Fort Wagner ought never to have been stormed with so small a force. Yet Shaw did not wholly fail; he proved what most he wanted to prove, that his negroes were capable of loyal courage. Nearly forty years later, when the St. Gaudens bas-relief of Shaw leading his coloured band was unveiled in Boston, an old negro with whitened hair and glowing eyes stood among the throng. On his uniform was a medal won "for gallantry in battle and for taking desperate chances." "I won it when I was with Colonel Shaw at Fort Wagner," he said.

An absolute sacrifice in morality is just as wrong as an absolute sacrifice in the business world. "Sacrifice!" at the head of Wanamaker's sale advertisement, of course, never means an absolute sacrifice of their business for your advantage. It only means that for the sake of their business as a whole, it pays them to sell some goods cheaper than they otherwise would. Absolute sacrifice is suicide, like cutting off your head to avoid toothache, and can never be right, but *sacrifice of a part for the sake of a more characteristic part* is forever necessary.

We have found two important truths about sacrifice: (1) That no good sacrifice is absolute, for it must express even through physical death the deepest purpose of the actor, and (2) that all earnest purposes demand sacrifice, as the doctor gives up sleep and the scientist intent on his discovery gives up society. If anyone lives without sacrifice, he is not living a normal, growing life, for sacrifice and effort are elements in growth.

Professor James, who feels the great danger of soft and flabby living, suggests this rule:[2] "Do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty." Such a rule seems a kind of moral gymnastics, valuable possibly for moral invalids, but not necessary for the healthy workers of the world. If you do thoroughly any work in which you are interested, it will bring its own sacrifices without any search after hardship for its own sake.

In the middle of the last century, a group of extrem-

[2] Wm. James, "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," p. 75.

ists in New England resolved sternly to deny themselves all luxury and live free from the snares and pitfalls of tea, meat, and butter. Emerson, while in sympathy with their desire for "plain living and high thinking," soon perceived that their enforced abstinence from the pleasure of eating and drinking tended to turn an abnormally large share of their attention upon eating and drinking. "It is better," he said, "to eat than to be forever desirous of eating."

It is common knowledge that men of no deliberately self-sacrificing intentions go without alcohol and tobacco because they are in training for the football team, and that means that they will do whatever such training requires. Sacrifice that springs out of the fulfilment of our chosen work is learned without pedantry or self-consciousness, and holds us with a steady grip that is lacking in any artificial effort. The doctor who gets up at night and drives eight miles in a hard snowstorm, the fireman who risks his life again and again to save a baby in a tenement, do not think of themselves as self-sacrificing. They think: "This is my job and I am going to do it," but it is they, and not the Transcendentalists who refuse to eat butter or meat, who stir every nobler impulse in us.

## IV

What is true of sacrifice is true also of effort. In no progressive work, however much we love it, is effort left out. In whatever we are to do well, we must

have learned the power of "labour, iron labour," the power of holding ourself by sheer grit to a thing at a point where it has become dull, and even more of holding ourself so firmly to the work that we shall not miss seeing the perpetually new openings in it which prevent its being dull. The drudgery consists oftentimes in the incessant need to rouse ourselves and rub our eyes, the effort which alone keeps us from going to sleep over our work and missing its growing nature. We all tire of keeping ourselves awake. There is a point just after we have sipped off the cream of any subject which we have made it our purpose to learn thoroughly, when there comes a strong temptation to turn to something new. To hold on doggedly just here is a supreme moral duty.

Such effort we shall always have to make, no matter how far we advance, but we want to get rid just as fast as is possible of special retarding conditions. Our teachers, physicians, ministers, philanthropists, and all who narrow and widen space and increase or diminish time for us, help to do away as far as is possible with conditions which are obstacles to moral growth. It is unnecessary that the toil of a child to understand arithmetic should be complicated by hard, unexplained words like divisor, multiplicand, and quotient, and the good teacher constantly decreases the drudgery of the uncomprehended.

So, too, we rightly hope that in not very distant time we may be able to put a great deal more into a small space, as already a telephone saves our time. There would then be far fewer of the special physical sacrifices

which we now have to make. Again, if, as seems possible, we learn to prevent a large part of the illnesses that now occur, much of the time spent in waiting on sick relatives would be saved, as the sewing machine has saved many hours of hand labour. But effort would not die out, for we should demand more of ourselves. The standard of moral living would rise, just as higher wages have made the standard of material living rise.

Things previously considered luxuries are now considered necessaries; so in morals, claims considered supererogations will become duties and desires. Advance does not exterminate an element like sacrifice or effort. It only changes its form. The persistent effort which is needed to make vivid what has become routine, we all know well, and we shall always know it.

While listening to a good music teacher giving a lesson I caught a new note of faithfulness. "I really can't practise on that any more, it bores me too much," said the pupil. "Why, Harold, what a strange state of mind. I don't understand it," said his teacher. (I pricked up my ears, it seemed such a natural state of mind to me.) "If you had learned it perfectly," she went on, "I should understand. Of course to go over and over what you know already is dull, but not where there is anything left for you to conquer. Listen hard, take each little phrase by itself and see if you are doing it with just the touch and evenness and precision and accent it ought to have, doing it as perfectly as it is capable of being done. Study it as if someone else were playing; go over it till you

have satisfied your ear. That is the way to find it interesting."

My very moral! The carrying out of your purpose in years of labour is drudgery unless you put into every fragment the same ideal and desire which made the first glimpse of the whole so appealing.

# CHAPTER XII

## SELFISHNESS

### I

THE question of selfishness has puzzled thinkers for many centuries. Jeremy Bentham, the English philosopher, went so far as to say: "Dream not that man will lift his little finger except for his own advantage." Everything anyone does is selfish, he asserts. On the other hand in the long period when asceticism prevailed people tried to get rid of self altogether by giving up everything they cared for, and scourging their shrinking bodies. Thomas à Kempis writes: "My son, thou canst not possess perfect liberty unless thou renounce thyself." [1]

In studying ethics we meet at every turn the problem of what selfishness is. We notice at once, however, that not all compounds of the word self are derogatory. Clara Barton is, everyone would say, an unusually self-reliant woman and we wholly respect her for it. If you look up the compounds of self in the dictionary you will find that they are numerous and that perhaps one-third are used as praise-giving, one-third as derogatory, and the remaining one-third in a neutral way.

Self-centred is a term of reproach, yet self-reliance is a duty.

[1] "Imitation of Christ," p. 117.

Self-seeking again is a sign of narrowness, but self-possession is all important. But can you possess anything you do not seek?

Self-complacency we all scorn, but self-respect is an important virtue.

Self-sacrifice is as we have seen essential to all good life, yet surely self-preservation is a duty.

Self-consciousness is interesting because in ordinary usage it is a defect; to the philosopher it is the central characteristic of man.

Tennyson writes:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control. These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

But Christ said: "If any man will come after me let him deny himself."

In these words and lines we see man's struggle in thought crystallised into language. Our very words as we pick them out dried and pressed in a dictionary show that people now insist on the virtue of denying yourself, again on the duty of relying on yourself, here on the sin of being self-centred and there on the necessity of self-respect, without fully seeing that the one little four-lettered word is twisted and tortured as we throw it about.

Since during the struggle the word self has become confused, we shall help to disentangle an important skein of thought by carefully untwisting the knots. To do this we have to go back almost to the starting point of moral life. If when walking along the street one sees a little boy give all his pennies to a poor child, one's first instinct is to exclaim: "How un-

selfish he is!" When, however, we learn that his father made him do it, we change our verdict. If he was forced to act thus, he was neither selfish nor unselfish, because though it was his hands which made the transfer, he did not do it himself. In other words, no one can be selfish or unselfish unless he acts of his own accord.

Professor Royce is fond of pointing out the absurdity of forced unselfishness by an extreme case.[2]

"Suppose a robber meets me in the highway and egotistically demands my purse. If now I manage to disarm him, to present a pistol to his head and ask him to accompany me to the nearest town, evidently the claims of altruism would for that man have a considerably stronger emphasis than they had the moment before." The passerby who saw the robber give money to the traveller may have thought it an unselfish act, but we know it is not, because no forced act can be either selfish or unselfish. This is equally true of any act, good or bad, which is done unconsciously or automatically, and through such considerations we see that to be selfish or unselfish we must have a self. To be either good or wicked we must have a self and all we do must in this sense start from that centre and so express the self.

There is a good story of a man travelling by night in a Pullman car. As the porter began to make up the berth, he said to the gentleman: "Excuse me, sir, but how do you like your head?" "Well," answered the traveller, "it isn't a very good one, but it is the

[2] Josiah Royce, "The Religious Aspects of Philosophy," p. 72.

only one I've got, so I try to make the best of it." This answer applies to everybody. In all we do we must start from our own end, that is, from our self, and we must make the best we can of it. To be either good or bad, we must have a self and every moral act is the act of that self.

If, now, anyone should say: "Dream not that men will lift their little finger except it be for their own advantage," we should answer: "If you merely mean that whatever a person does must be an expression of his nature, that is true." Of course everything we do must be done because we want it, but if you mean that every man seeks his *private* advantage, that is absurdly untrue. Each man's self is different. One man may like his own bodily comfort better than anything else; he takes the best peach, the warm corner, the most comfortable armchair; in the crowded car, he turns over the seat and lets people stand while he puts his feet up. At the other extreme is a woman like Clara Barton, who has identified herself with the relief of suffering. You may say if you choose that she acts for herself (that is, does what she wants), as much as does the selfish man, but the difference is in the size of the self she works for. The bodily self which to him is all engrossing, is to her just a means to her work. She too has an impulse for comfort, but she denies it. She is willing to yield all bodily comfort to the service of her larger self which stretches out all over the universe. The cause of suffering humanity wherever it may be found is that with which she has identified herself. The man

who seeks bodily comfort is at home only in his own easy chair by his blazing wood-fire, where he can smoke his good Havana cigar in peace. Clara Barton is at home wherever there is a cry of distress that she can ease, a starving child that she can feed, a wounded soldier to whom she can bring relief.

II

This brings us to a question whose answer has already been suggested in the chapters on Interest, What really is ourself? The fact that our body is separated from other bodies and moves about apparnetly independent of them sometimes leads people to identify it with themselves and to feel that all contained in brain or body is themselves, all outside not themselves. We cannot hold this view long when once we face it. It is clearly absurd to call our toenails or our hair ourself, and our most intimate friends not ourselves. The one happens to be attached to our body, the other is attached to us, not by chance, but by the strongest cords of our nature.

"Our fame, our children, the work of our hands, may be as dear to us as our bodies are and arouse the same feelings, the same acts of reprisal if attacked. And our bodies themselves, are they simply ours, or are they *us?* Certainly men have been ready to disown their very bodies and to regard them as mere vestures or even as prisons of clay from which they should some day be glad to escape." [3]

If then we cannot limit ourselves to our bodies or to our brain, we must reach out to include as ourself all

[3] Wm. James, "Psychology," vol. i. p. 291.

that we love, all with which we can identify ourselves, that is, our *interests*. Emerson was not merely a long-legged man with an angelic smile. He was far more truly his interest in or love of religious truth, and in the expression of that truth, his love of Concord and of his friends and neighbours, his love of children, his interest in America and in nature.

We reach here an important conclusion: If all we love is ourself, the separation between doing things for ourselves and doing things for others whom we love is broken down. It was an unreal distinction, though it looked firm in the distance, and it crumbles when we really come up against it. There is no one who lives wholly in his narrow shell, shutting out the entire world of people and pursuits. All my interests are, or should be, more than mine, becoming more my own when they are comprehended and grasped by my larger self, the life of all the people I love and reverence. That is why it is so hard to have your best friend dislike or misunderstand what you are wrapt up in. Your interest is not fully yours unless he shares it. This is why we rush impetuously to tell our great piece of news. We hardly know it till it has spread to the whole of ourself. How unreal the distinction between ourself and those we love is we realise when we think of any strong affection. We all have people so dear to us that their suffering or joy is as real to us or more real than our own. In the noblest souls, selfish indulgence at the expense of another would be a far greater pain than any conceivable personal sacrifice.[4]

[4] John Caird, "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion," p. 278.

I know a woman who hardly feels her own deprivation and suffering. It is the suffering of the poor in the slums, of the wounded in body or soul, of the lonely, ugly and insignificant people which troubles her. Can we call it unselfish that she gives money to the poor when it would be far more painful to her to withhold it? The mother whom you praise for unselfish devotion to her children is hurt, not pleased, by your commendation. Her children are herself, her life. So, once more, if you should compliment Edison or Darwin on their unselfish devotion to science they would laugh at the phrase. Our most living interest cannot thus be separated from us, it is ours, but with equal truth, we are it.

The inadequacy of the distinction between selfishness and unselfishness is thus apparent in any relation of strong affection whether it is shown in devotion to science or to people.

We have found:

(a) That all responsible or moral acts are our own and in that sense self-chosen.

(b) That self is not limited by our bodies, but is as wide as our interests.

(c) That by any strong affection, the division between self and others is obliterated.

III

If we are to give the word selfishness any real meaning we must re-define it. It cannot mean doing what on the whole you most want, for everyone does that. It cannot mean putting yourself before others, for

many a mother who gives her peevish child all her time and strength acts selfishly. No, to be selfish is simply to be narrower than your broadest sympathy; blinder than your clearest insight; more irresolute than your strongest will; more careless than your most thorough thoughtfulness; in other words, it is to be disloyal to your aim. Selfishness can be accurately distinguished from other sin only by the accent of wilful narrowness in relation to people. The moral sphere is the sphere of self-hood. Within self-hood, we find disloyalty to the growing nature of self which is selfishness or immorality, and response to the growing nature of self, which we call unselfishness when it concerns people.

Selfishness is trying to foster any part of yourself by cramping your *whole* self, that is, the open and growing devotion to all you love. The selfish mother is always partial. Instead of thinking of the whole of her child and herself, she weakly gives it all it cries for and refuses to recognise how this will injure the child in the future. Again a selfish person is private-spirited, instead of outgoing or public-spirited. When we hear that Andrew Carnegie has given $400,000 to Tuskegee, we do not yet know whether his act is selfish or unselfish. It is selfish if it is private-spirited, that is, if he considered only that it would reflect to his own glory, or if he desired merely to be free from the burden of further requests from Tuskegee. It is unselfish, that is, public-spirited, if with careful investigation, possibly at the cost of a pleasure trip which he had planned, he devoted time and strength to the de-

cision how he could best invest his money in character-building. As a matter of fact I believe the act was unselfish. Mr. Carnegie refrained from giving to Tuskegee for ten years after he was first asked. He waited until he was thoroughly convinced of the value of the work. Then he gave first $20,000 for the library and afterwards $400,000 for endowment. His refusal to give was probably as unselfish as his liberal gift, for both took thought and will.

Again an unselfish act must be one in which we try to be open-minded, not blinded. It is not easy to judge even with ourselves whether we have been as open-minded as we could, but only by such a test, and not by any result, can a selfish or unselfish act be judged. It probably comes occasionally into the minds of many of us to ask ourselves: Is it not selfish to spend large sums of money on parties, when people in our own community are starving? The answer is: Not if we have tried fully to face both the opportunity to help the starving, the good done by the social ties, and the joy, the artistic beauty developed and expressed by parties, and have decided candidly that our money is best spent in giving parties. It is selfish if we shut our ears to the needs of the poor in order to quench any qualms of doubt in our minds; if we deceive ourselves into thinking that we give parties to patronise the florists, the musicians or the caterers, and thereby help the poor, or if we carelessly spend more than will accomplish our end. A Newport woman who said she sought pleasure regardless of expense was cleverly answered: "It seems rather that you seek expense,

regardless of pleasure." Only too often the beauty, interest and delight of society is crushed out by the overpowering sense of expense. Every cent which is not spent in really furthering our aim, whether it is weakly given to a tramp or added to a florist's bill, is spent wrongly.

Such must be our test for ourselves. What is the test for others? We cannot judge others without knowing their motives as well as we know our own. A rich man enters the only store in a small village and buys the last loaf of bread. In the shop at the same time is a starving woman with only five cents who asks for bread. The rich man sees but does not notice her, and goes out bearing with him the only loaf. Our instinct is to call him a selfish brute. He did not notice her, but ought he not to have noticed her? The answer depends wholly on the question (which corresponds to those we have discussed in the chapter on "Boundaries") whether he had even a moment's glimpse of an alternative choice. If he did not he was neither selfish nor unselfish. He may, for example, have been so intensely absorbed in the thought of a sick child at home that he had neither eyes nor ears for anything else. On the other hand he was selfish if he deliberately or carelessly ignored the woman's need and considered only his own dinner, if, that is, he blinded himself into wilful neglect of his human sympathy.

You will notice that all along I have spoken of a selfish act not as a narrow or blind act, but as one which is narrower or blinder than it might have been

from the point of view of the actor. Exactly the same outward act may be selfish when done by one person and gloriously unselfish for another, just as it may be an act of dissipation for me to read an easy French story during study hours, and an act of virtue for the beginner to whom it is hard and whose work it is.

Four people are sitting near one another in church, listening to a missionary sermon. The first is a miser; he is really moved by the appeal for foreign missions, but to give up his money is like pulling teeth. He wonders how much he ought to give and whether he could keep part of what is in his purse; then with a resolute effort he puts purse and all into the plate. It is an unselfish act, for it is one he thought right and it is a hard one. Next him sits a millionaire, who as the plate passes, conspicuously flourishes a $50 bill so that it is visible to his neighbours and drops it in. At a little distance sit two women, one of whom without a moment's thought drops in all the money she has and the other with great self-restraint refuses to give anything, because she knows her first duty is to her little ones. Here we recognise that the miser and the woman who gave nothing are those who deserve our praise, for each is doing a hard act which takes courage and breadth of view. To the millionaire the gift means only a chance to air his liberality. To the first woman the gift is so instinctive that it is almost automatic or non-moral, because her nature is already an unselfish one.

IV

We reach next a distinction of significance. There is a difference between reaching beyond one's past in an unselfish *act* and the possession of an unselfish *character*. It seems at first almost contradictory when we find that the more unselfish in character anyone becomes the less do we class his special acts as unselfish. If a girl has so unselfish a nature that she loves her father better than herself, the liberality she shows in giving him the best seat or in sacrificing her pleasure for his is not unselfish to the degree of that of the naturally self-centred girl who with a great and deliberate effort to do right, yields her pleasure to that of her father. So our miser at church was more unselfish in the particular act than his generous neighbour who gave instinctively. If however he continued year by year to give the same amount until it became automatic he would no longer be acting unselfishly. He would have outgrown his own low standard of selfishness and we must then judge his acts by a harder test, just as in any game such as golf we no longer call good the strokes which would have satisfied us the year before. In moral life, as in golf, we are engaged in progressively beating our own best stroke, and the 100 yards which we count as a triumph at first becomes simply an average or even a failure, when we have reached the possibility of a drive of 150 yards.

There is an anecdote told of Abraham Lincoln which, whether true or not, is characteristic. Lincoln was driving one day with some of his friends when

he saw a pig struggling helplessly in a ditch. He drove by, but after a few minutes turned back and pulled the muddy pig out of the ditch. On being praised for his act he replied that he did it on his own account as he kept getting more uncomfortable the more he thought of the pig in distress. Shall we call his act unselfish? It was undoubtedly an expression of the unselfish *character* of one who had so nourished humanity in himself that he was concerned by the suffering of the pig and did not forget it even when it was out of sight. His *act* however may have been so instinctive an expression of his nature that we can hardly class it as unselfish, for an unselfish act must involve effort and thought.

A diagram may make clearer the relation between any unselfish act which is always breaking the shell of its past, and the possession of a more or less unselfish character which corresponds to the size, small or great, of the shell we possess. We find in the world people whose main interest is in their private circle, their house, clothes, or food. Such people may be classified as in the smaller circle, and for them it is a moral or unselfish act to pierce into the second circle by enlarging their sympathy to include generosity to a cousin or neighbour. For the people who are identified with their family circle it is not unselfish to act generously toward them. It does require unselfishness to break down the walls which separate one's exclusive circle from the next, that of

devotion to the nation or to the progress of science. In each case the unselfish act is a breaking of the walls which separate and narrow us. The order of the circles is irrelevant. There are those to whom animals are more appealing than people, those to whom the nation is more vividly real than their next door neighbour. Each of these must follow in different ways the same course of enlarging his mansion to more stately form.

Do the best people then become more and more incapable of unselfishness because generous acts are more instinctive to them? No, not in the world of growing opportunity in which circle spreads beyond circle, for the very breaking of the narrower bonds shows new chances for unselfishness, though in some cases so altered in form that like the caterpillar and the butterfly, they are hardly to be recognised as the same. Take again the case of a daughter who loves her father more than herself. Can she be selfish toward him? Yes, it would be really selfish if she indulged an unreasonable desire on his part in order to save herself the pain of refusing him. It is a part of unselfishness to be ready to give, as well as to receive, necessary pain.

Unselfishness is then simply the thoughtful, sympathetic, resolute choice of the expanding opportunity in our relation to people; selfishness, like all sin of which it is one aspect, is wilful blindness to what we ought to see.

The word selfishness is associated chiefly with actions related to other people, but if we are to retain the word at all it must be enlarged:

(1) In one sense all selfish acts are committed against oneself, for selfishness cramps and pinches the budding life of interests which is most truly ourself.

(2) It is common to see utterly self-forgetting devotion to art and science, unselfish because public and faithful, and to see blind, jealous exclusive devotion to a person, devotion thoroughly selfish, because in it one thinks not of the good that both can do, but only of the response to one's own gratification. If we are inspired in the presence of those we love, we must be inspired to *do something* and avoid luxuriating in the sense of warmth and exaltation for the time, and then falling back or failing to live a wider or deeper life.

(3) No one can rest on attained unselfishness. Any point that we have reached, however it may look to the outsider a goal, is for us a starting point.

# CHAPTER XIII

## SYMPATHY

### I

We have seen that interests are life-givers and life-savers; we now come to a subject as closely related to interest and often as indistinguishable from it as are twin sisters from one another,—the subject of sympathy. It is true that we often think of interest as cold and of sympathy as warm, of interest as impersonal and of sympathy as lavished on people, but as I have already shown, no living interest can be other than glowing and no person can arouse sympathy except through the interests, present or to come, that make him himself. Interest and sympathy are inextricably knit aspects of any identification of ourselves with what is beyond ourselves.

Because interest and sympathy are inseparable, we see at once that any man without sympathy would be without intelligence. If such a man exists he is hardly human, for his nature is shrivelled to the unreality of a geometrical point. What we do find are two widely severed extremes of sympathy, one narrow and momentary, the other wide and loyal. At one extreme we see a poor idiot child, who, though very demonstrative for the moment, forgets his mother when separated from her sooner than the bereft cow ceases to bellow

for her calf. His interest can only be roused by the sound of the dinner bell. Most of the day he looks out on the world with vacant eyes, comprehending nothing.

At the other extreme we encounter the truly human man, the person of wide sympathies who is eagerly interested in life on many sides. One such comes vividly before me as many such fortunately do to the minds of any one of us. I see him eagerly bending over the newspaper, intent on the latest news of the New York election or the revolution in Panama. I watch the quick sympathy of his eyes as the old carpenter, whom he has not seen for several years, approaches, rubbing a soiled hand on his trousers before he offers it. I picture him as he bends to greet a little girl whom he designates his special friend, or as he stands measuring with his cane the width of the great oak on the lawn. We come to him with our interests or our difficulties as we come to the sun for light, sure of a warm reception. He is one of those who because he suffers with those who suffer, rejoices greatly with all those who rejoice.

Here is one who gleans from the world inexhaustible interests and who therefore is young at eighty. It is the same world that his next-door neighbour finds unutterably dull and burdensome. To each in the same mail comes a request for money, a pitiful story of poverty and isolation. To the first, it is the dawning of a new interest, to the second another tiresome note to be read and destroyed. The difference in the nature of these two is registered by their sympathies, for sym-

pathy is the sign of the width and depth of self-hood. The great man is he whose sympathies are intense, wide and loyal.

Since sympathy is intricately bound up with interest, it, like interest, grows with knowledge. It is a constantly exhilarating experience to find what once was dry and inert to us grow alive and rousing as we pull off the outer husks and discover the seed-corn. How hopelessly stupid Civil Service Reform or the "Critique of Practical Reason" or the Binomial Theorem sound! Yet in these dark realms many have found and made light, and the professor treasures his first edition of Kant's "Critique," as lovingly and in much the same spirit as the child treasures her Blue Fairybook.

We all know people whom once, when we knew them slightly, we were afraid of or disliked. Now they are our intimate friends. We look at them wonderingly sometimes and say: "Doesn't it seem strange that there was a time when we were perfectly indifferent to one another?" Yet what has made the difference has been only more thorough knowledge and fully awakened sympathy. There are thousands of other people and other interests around us, equally real and warm, though we still treat them as cold. They will become real to us when we realise them. What we cannot make real to ourselves makes no appeal. Many children inquire eagerly whether a fairy tale is real before they will fully enter into its spirit, but others so steep themselves in the story that it is real to them from the start. Now the lives about us are real and it is only a failure to realise them that makes us unsympathetic

and selfish. We need not only to see ourselves as others see us, but to see others as they see themselves.

II

Prof. Josiah Royce in a stirring chapter in "The Religious Aspects of Philosophy" says that all "selfishness is due to an illusion."[1] It is only through sympathy that we reach the truth, or as we accurately say, *realise* things and people as they are, see and feel them as real, not as shadows or masks. There are people whose lives are as real to us as our own. These we call friends and brothers, for they are realised as human and so akin, but the outer circle of our acquaintance, or of those with whom we deal in business, are often far less real and living to us than the sparrows at our feet. We think of them as means to our ends, or vaguely and dimly as "strangers" or "foreigners."

The more we deal with large undertakings and live in great cities, the more easily we slip into the danger of treating outsiders as though they were machines. We call up "Central" on the telephone and though the voice that responds is human, it is to us only a means to our end of asking 20 people to join a sleighing party. We rush one message after another and are annoyed if the connections come slowly; we are almost unaware of the tired, hurried woman who may be longing to get home to a sick mother. In the early days of the telephone "Central" was less of a callous machine

[1] "Religious Aspects of Philosophy," pp. 146-170.

than she has now become by the hardening process of being so treated, and when roughly assailed for a number, she burst out once in a pathetic voice, "Oh, I will connect you just as soon as I can if you only will not speak crossly to me." Then for a moment the live woman flashed before the vision of her interlocutor.

Such mechanical ideas of his patient may easily become fastened on the doctor in a great hospital as day after day numbers of people with similar complaints seek his advice. He gives the same prescription to many, and unless he is a man not only of keen, but of trained sympathy, he will find his expression of it in each recurring case likely to diminish. It seems to him as though these haggard, discouraged faces had been before him many times already, that these pale lips had faltered out the same story, and asked the same question which he has already answered so many times. He is apt to be cross and curt, because of the illusory impression that this same question has been asked again and again by the same patient who carelessly and stupidly forgets what he was told but a moment ago. Yet to each patient the experience is new and critical; his life or his hope of bread-earning hang on the doctor's word. It is the great and often tragic moment of his life. To remember this freshly every time is to learn the lesson of sympathy.

Nor do we need the realising power of sympathy only in relation to mere acquaintances or in business dealings. There are often strangers within our gates, some member of the family whose habits and acts are

known to us, but whose real life is blurred and overshadowed by the thousand daily trifles about which we talk and talk, yet which choke the avenues of deeper intercourse. Unless we wake to realise this, and tenderly but steadily clear away the obstruction that hides the stream of his life from us, he will continue to be a stranger though within our gates.

Sympathy is then the power of making any situation become alive to us through realising it as it is. Though we all possess it to some extent, in some relations and for part of the time, it is easy to show that in most of us it is narrow in its range and intermittent in power. I will try to make this clear by other illustrations.

Some years ago the papers were full of the accidental sinking of the *Victoria,* an English man-of-war, through a collision in a naval drill. She went down with all on board. The account of it was dramatic, and when I met an English friend that afternoon I spoke of it incidentally. His face was agonised and suddenly I realised what it meant. The men on the *Victoria* were his intimate friends and it was torture to wait till he could hear further details. To me it had been merely a touching story, not a reality which cut and pierced and exalted. That I could hurt my friend by a casual mention of what to him was a darkness that for the time shut out the sun, showed that the veil of illusion was before me. It is this only which makes brutality and selfishness possible.

Take another case. In the autumn of 1900 we all heard of the capture of Aguinaldo's mother. "Ah, that's one step gained. I hope they will catch Aguin-

aldo himself next," was the general comment. A few months later, Mrs. John Bass, wife of the correspondent of *Harper's Weekly*, gave me some details: "It was a terrible shame to imprison that poor old lady," she said; "just imagine; she is over eighty, and while the United States was still friendly with the Filipinos she had often entertained the American ladies at her house and been most kind to them. Nevertheless when one day they arrested and imprisoned her with Aguinaldo's little boy, not one of the ladies came near her to make things a little more comfortable during her imprisonment. I went in as soon as I could and found her very unhappy. The baby was playing on the floor and smiling. 'Poor little fellow,' she said, 'how little he knows what danger and suffering his father is going through.'"

This case illustrates what Prof. Royce means when he says that "selfishness is illusion." We act selfishly whenever we let a veil of laziness or prejudice remain between us and all we can get of the truth.

III

This definition of Sympathy as the effort to realise the truth about any situation, cuts off as partial and inadequate all expressions of sympathy which are so one-sided as to weaken instead of strengthen. If the word sympathy is to keep its hold, it must include firmness and good sense as elements in its structure. We must mean by sympathy not merely thought of others, but a vivid realisation of the whole situation. Many a time

two self-effacing women will stand and urge each other to take the only seat in the car until the destination of one of them is reached. When travelling through Europe some years ago, two affectionate sisters were wont to dispute at each hotel, because each was desirous that the other should have the better room. Each would have much preferred to rest after her journey in *any* room rather than to be delayed and wearied by the amicable dispute, but it took some time for them to learn that self-effacement is not sympathy and that when A thinks only of B and B of A, the result is no better than when A thinks only of A and B of B. A and B alike must think of what is best on the whole.

In any normal life we are so placed that not you or I, but the whole we serve is the goal of our efforts. If the soprano in a quartette should always sing softly in order that the other parts should be heard above hers, she would defeat the aim of the quartette as a whole. So the self-sacrificing member of a family who drops all her interests in order to indulge the wishes of the brothers and sisters who want her always at home and ready to talk or amuse them, is not truly sympathetic. To decide just what her best course should be, she must look ahead and around, taking in the situation as a whole, not effacing herself nor ignoring any element.

I know a well-to-do family in which the oldest daughter has been devoted for years to her young sister and brother and to her step-father. They are semi-invalids and have got into the habit of having her entertain them by any gossip she can pick up. If she

takes a walk she must on her return tell about every person to whom she bowed and every dog which barked. Her family beg for little scraps of information as a tramp begs for scraps of bread and meat and with as little permanent benefit. The discomfort of their pathetically starved lives is for the time relieved, but they never gain the power to make their own life. Meanwhile their sister, who was once a person of energy and spirit, has become dulled and saddened by the constant strain of entertaining them. When they die she will be no longer young; she has cultivated no strong interest, she is wholly untrained for the needs of the world. She is only too likely to drift along on the dreary road of seeking entertainment which is the only path she really knows. Her family do not mean to act selfishly toward her, but they let her pauperise them. She desires to give them the fullest, most constant sympathy, but she is steadily making them narrower and more inert, less self-reliant and more dependent on outside help. Many people who are as ill as they are doing valuable work.

Now sympathy, in the sense of a warm realisation of the whole situation, its outlook as well as its immediate bearing, would create a new atmosphere about these people. The labour of the daughter would serve to kindle a living interest in her father and sister and brother instead of blowing a flame without supplying any lasting fuel. Anyone who is truly sympathetic will try not to be legs and arms to another, but to put him on his feet. We must guard against hurting those we love by doing too much for them as we would guard

against hurting delicate birds by over-handling. It may well be that your profession is to help your family or those about you to get on their feet; and if so, you should do the work as a vocation. If such a piece of work is your vocation, it should be undertaken and carried on as systematically and steadily as the building of a temple. Work done in such a spirit is done with full sympathy; gladly because it is our life work; liberally because we know of no better use for our time; thoroughly because our attention is awake to its needs. And we must never forget that as we are happy and expressed through our service to them, so will those we serve be when they too can in some similar or different way, express themselves through service. Since without sympathy we are not human, everyone needs not only to receive, but to give sympathy.

Here and again one finds in a great city a lonely man or woman who has no friends. One such had lived in Boston and taken in sewing for several years before she made a single real acquaintance. It was through the new evening schools called Educational Centres that she found not only a chance to study, but what was far better, congenial friends, to whom she could give and from whom she could receive sympathy. Most of us naturally find these opportunities with our family and friends. We do more for them than for strangers because, as we have seen, they are more ourselves. Without them we are torn asunder and because they are ourselves we are best fitted to help them as we cannot help those who are strangers in spirit.

IV

We have seen that to be widely or loyally sympathetic is to be really alive. How can one reach out and obtain this more abundant life? By throwing oneself wholly and heartily into whatever one does. We all have moments and flashes of sympathy, but unless we seize and use them they fade away. I once heard a famous doctor say to the young probationers who had just begun the work of training to be nurses: "I know that every one of you has some sympathy in your heart, some longing to help in the world, else you would not be here. Do not be afraid to express it. You will soon go out to nurse. It may be some dirty woman in a miserable tenement or some cranky, irritable man crippled with rheumatism. Pour out every bit of your sympathy. *It is only by freely expressing it that more will flow in.* When we reserve our sympathy it grows stagnant within us. If you see an old woman lying poor and helpless on the bed, think that it might be your own mother who is lying there and speak to her as tenderly as though it were."

In Shakspere's "Macbeth," he shows with one of those wonderful intuitions that daily deepen our reverence for his work, that even a hardened nature like that of Lady Macbeth has still its ray of sympathy which struggles to enter the darkened chambers of the will. Just for the moment, while she looked at Duncan sleeping peacefully under the shelter of her own roof, she was moved by pity. He looked like her father, and the resemblance made her realise for an instant that the

gracious, trusting king was as warm, as human, as her father. For a second she saw the truth and sympathy was supreme, but she thrust it aside and the king again became unreal to her, merely an obstacle in the way of her ambition, of no more significance than a rock which we blast because it blocks our avenue.

If Lady Macbeth had not shown that single ray of humanity, we might have thought her a monster, a hyena, incapable of sympathy and so neither selfish nor unselfish; but knowing that she was once moved by pity, we know her sin. If instead of shoving aside the thought of Duncan, she had kept the realisation of his life and the tragedy of his death as vivid as that of her father, it would have been impossible for her to murder the king or to let Macbeth do it. Full attention, whole-heartedness, annihilate brutality and develop sympathy.

We all have some person or some subject toward which we are whole-hearted. It does not matter what it is; it may be the theatre, it may be our father or baby sister, or it may be a collection of shells. Whenever this warm subject comes into sight, a brilliant light flashes out from it and all is aglow. Now round the edges of this central light are places less bright and less the centre of attention, but still far more irradiated than the dark beyond. If we gradually extend our interest to these bright but vaguer edges of our interest, they will come to shine with the fire of our central lamp and beyond them too the dark will be pierced with darts of light. Love of my father leads to interest in his work as a carpenter and then to love

of all manual work. A love of shells may lead to love of biology and so of all science. It is by this flashing of the searchlight of our central interest upon everything in its neighbourhood that sympathy grows.

## V

We often speak of the sympathetic person as one who can draw out others, but we rarely sufficiently realise how constant and how far-reaching is this creative power. The sun draws out the tight green petals of the apple buds and they unfold into new colour and fragrance; but no less truly or wonderfully sympathy unfolds the richness and delicacy of a nature which closes tightly before coldness and indifference.

"We must act on generous presumptions. We must impute virtue. We must invest the world with its own divinity," a friend of mine once said. She followed her own counsel and those who went to her became more and more themselves.

The principal of a well-known Massachusetts school, a negress, who has won her way to an important position by her own strength and gentleness, said recently: "The hardest thing that the negroes have to contend against is distrust. It is a hard and often bitter trial to have your advance blocked not only by your own imperfections, but by an almost universal disbelief in your power." "Fortunately," she added, with a slight smile, "the negro by what is perhaps a lucky trait of his nature, does believe in himself, and the fact

that some great Americans have believed in him is a constant spur to his advance."

Our distrust holds back, our faith stimulates. George Eliot has beautifully expressed this truth:

"There are natures in which if they love us we are conscious of having a sort of baptism or consecration. They bind us over to rectitude and purity by their pure belief about us, and our sins become the worst sort of sacrilege which tears down the invisible altar of trust."

# CHAPTER XIV

## IMAGINATION

### I

We are apt to think of imagination as if it belonged chiefly to artists and poets, forgetting that each of us is in his special sphere a creator and possessed of the poetic gift of imagination. With many of us imagination is keen in relation to the people whom we love; with all of us imagination is kindled and kept shining by sympathy.

"He must be hungry at boarding-school. I'll send him a box of cake," says the indulgent mother. "I try to see Mrs. Brown nearly every day, for though she seems bright and never says anything, I know she's lonely without her daughters," the kind neighbour explains. There is no one so prosaic but that he becomes an artist toward his friends, no one so engrossed in the present but that in his plans he uses foresight. I am saving my money to build a house at the seashore. Not a brick is laid; but the idea of that house and of the delicious sea-breezes becomes through imagination real enough to hold me from the visible allurements of sleigh-rides or new clothes.

Not only in what we plan, but in all that we see we constantly use imagination. The red wall of my

neighbour's house looks solid and hard because my imagination leaps to the conclusion that it is made of brick; but my eyes never *see* the brick. Sitting one day in a hotel at Capri, I beheld an exquisite mountain, blue and distant, but when I went nearer the mountain collapsed and there remained only a board fence, cunningly painted to deceive me.

My father's house is not to me what I see with my eyes. The life within comes flashing before me as soon as I speak of it and as I look at its visible outline it glows with a warmth of meaning the stranger can never know.

In these everyday illustrations of imagination I have tried to use the word in a sense which distinguishes it from fancy, for the confusion of these two terms has often played havoc with our understanding of one another's meaning. The distinction between fancy and imagination is this: imagination seeks and tries further to reveal the dawning truth and so is guided by law, while fancy is ungoverned by any such allegiance. The creations of imagination are based on facts, but go beyond the facts in the direction toward which they point. Fancy too starts from facts and goes beyond them, but cuts loose at once from any loyalty to the trend of reality. Many people have had delicious fancies awakened as they dream over a steaming teakettle; but it is only to a man of trained imagination like Watts that the tea kettle suggests new principles and prophetic constructions which reveal themselves at last in the steam-engine.

II

When we define imagination as *the power to follow the spirit and trend of any fact*, we begin to see how essential it is to all work, how necessary an ally in moral life. It is a lantern that throws light on the path ahead and keeps us from the double danger of standing still or stumbling. We shall realise this more vividly by following its use in different parts of experience.

Often my friend begins a sentence and I finish it. If I do this rightly it is because I know my friend. Imagination must always work on the basis of sound knowledge. But not only must my friend know my character,—she must also pay the strictest attention to what I am saying just now. We all know those provoking people who complete our half-finished sentences by some interpolation of what we used to say, who cannot distinguish our ten-year-old maxim from this our newborn idea. They have memory, but lack imagination. To know what I mean now you must listen to these particuliar words as I speak them and see where they point. If you are following you will know that they point somewhere, as all facts do.

Keen attention and deep knowledge are both essential to imagination and it is through such imagination that the strongest friendships grow and reveal their creative power. The friend who anticipates your need, and with delicate reverence offers you the opportunity for which your nature half consciously hungered, is as truly a creator as Browning or Raphael.

Such opportunities we miss every day through that untimely coldness which chills the emerging insight as frost chills tender petals. A few years ago a woman came to my door and asked to see me. I was busy and my annoyance at being interrupted was increased by finding that all she wanted was to sell me some gaudy-coloured paper sunshades. I said hastily that I did not want any and was about to turn away when an appealing look in the girl's eyes arrested me. It was a very cold night, incongruous enough with paper sunshades, and as soon as I looked at her with any imagination, I saw that she was shivering in the thin ragged shawl which barely covered her shoulders. "Come in and get warm by the fire," I said, "and tell me why you choose to sell these fragile sunshades that few people are likely to want." Then she poured out a pitiful story. She had left her home in New Hampshire on the promise of first-rate pay in a Lynn shoe factory. When she reached Lynn, she was told that there was no work but that there might be later. Most of her money had been spent in railroad tickets and she was without friends in an unknown city. The boarding house to which she went by chance turned out to be disreputable and she left it with almost no money and with little hope of obtaining work. Her only plan was to make the one fancy article she knew how to make and try to sell it. But for a haunted look which roused me from my absorption I should have turned out into cold and danger a girl who was in dire need.

Imagination is the power to be in whatever we touch. It is through imagination that we fill in the gaps and

out of fragments make a whole. Take for example the condensed items of a newspaper's headlines.

News of the Day.

Railroad accident. Forty men killed.

The Legislature passes the eight-hour law for factories.

Dalton opens its new library.

Heavy gales at sea. *Campania* three days late.

Miners at Wilkes-Barre out on a strike.

Corner in wheat.

Each of these items in a newspaper may be read with the maximum or with the minimum of imagination. Every one is of intense interest when seen in its full meaning, and affects hundreds of lives. Yet so unimaginative are we that we often read the newspaper in a bored way and as we throw it down complain that there is nothing in it. There is indeed nothing in it for those who are "out of it." The strike at Wilkes-Barre may concern us only because it raises the price of coal. But if our imagination is awake, the strike must mean to us a human struggle of intense and far-reaching significance, a struggle for better conditions and a more human life of the labourers, for the rights of employers and for the satisfaction of the needs of the public. It should fascinate us like a great surging wave to watch the growth of law as it draws into its sway the new conditions as they arise. The labour movement must deeply stir any imaginative onlooker by its new lessons of courage, patience, and self-sacrifice.

Unless we are thus aroused we cannot get a true view, for to be lukewarm in an ardent world is to miss the truth.

It is equally true whether we undertake business, politics, philanthropy, or sight-seeing, that no growing work is done without penetrative imagination. Something of the same creative impulse which in other decades has made poets is now making great men of business and inventors here in America. They look through the present with its urgent needs and its raw material; they see the future and daringly they construct it. Seventy years ago Chicago was a marshy plain with here and there a rough log cabin. It took keen imagination to realise that because Chicago lay close to the chain of great lakes with a vast extent of uncultivated fertile country to the west, it must become a great city.

So the great diamond-king, Cecil Rhodes, became an empire maker because he combined, in his own phrase, "imagination and commerce."[1] He was sent to South Africa at the age of seventeen to battle with consumption which a London physician thought would allow him only six months more of life. He improved in health, won an immense fortune and used it to extend the British Empire in South Africa from the Orange River to the Zambesi, Victoria Falls and Mashonaland. The conception of the unity of the English-speaking race, formed in his early manhood and embodied in his now famous will, remained

[1] See article on Cecil Rhodes, by W. T. Stead, *Review of Reviews*, May, 1902.

the great passion of his life to which money-making was only a means. And the root from which his ideal and all its consequences sprang seems to have been these words of Aristotle learned at Oxford:

"Virtue is the highest activity of the soul living for the highest objects."

The search of Rhodes throughout his early life was for "something sufficiently lofty to make it worth while to spend your entire life for it." This he found in the idea of the domination of Africa by the English-speaking race. This he carried out by grasping the commercial and political situation in South Africa and moulding it to his ends.

The work of Cecil Rhodes was so closely linked with politics that it illustrates the need of imagination in that field as well as in business. The politician is often criticised for having his "ear to the ground," yet no great leader can act without listening intently to the murmur of growing ideas among the people. The true leader is not he who does not listen, but he who, while he notes the superficial and temporary mood, hears also and reënforces that undercurrent of common sense which is the motive power of democracy. It needs faith to sustain this spirit of democracy by which the real will of the people becomes the voice of God; it needs constant imagination to foresee and adequately to mould its new channels.

Who can say what better issues would have been wrought into the history of the United States if Lincoln, with his far-reaching sympathy and unwearied

power of imagination, had lived through the period of Reconstruction? It was a problem which demanded the genius of an inventor and the delicate perception of an artist; but the short-sighted unimaginative "thoroughness" of Reconstruction without Lincoln to guide it (the stunted view which saw only the obvious elements), has left the southern problem a sore spot in our national life.

One would suppose that in sight-seeing, we should all recognise the value of imagination, yet even here few of us gain all that we might if we used its powerful long-distance telescope. When we visit Rome, we may only see a mixture of modern buildings, ugly Renaissance churches, and ruins, with a muddy, sluggish stream winding through the town. But if we use imagination, we can picture the story of centuries that is written there. We can feel the heart-beats of mythical Rome, and see Horatio swim the Tiber; of republican Rome, and watch Brutus when, to save the republic, he stabs Cæsar. We can behold the Roman Empire and the gorgeous colouring of its decay; the barbaric invasion with its exuberant destructiveness; the church militant rising out of the dim catacombs and bursting into an overpowering luxuriance. Then as we turn to new Italy, it will be with an illumined understanding.

III

Imagination breaks away not alone the walls of distance and of time, but of circumstance as well.

Always there are going on in a great city at the same time, lives of rejoicing and splendour and lives of suffering and degradation; but the walls of our dulness and oblivion keep them rigidly apart. If a gay party was dining sumptuously in a New York restaurant and suddenly the intervening house-walls become transparent and the diners saw a miserable family with ragged clothes and pinched faces huddling over a dying fire, they could not at once go on laughing, talking and eating as before. I do not mean to imply that it would be best for these gay people to sell all they had and give to the poor, because poverty is not the worst of all evils, nor is everyone fitted to relieve it, nor is it best that everyone shall follow the same lines of work. But the poverty, and the degradation which it often entails, are always there and it is only after we have faced these facts and measured their claim on our time and money that we have a right to turn away from the distress. It must not be the walls of ignorance and obtuseness which let us give our time and money to chance pleasure or to the round of daily work.

Such an example as that of the diners in the luxurious restaurant shows us how frequently selfishness is the child of lack of imagination. To keep a hard-working dressmaker for months without the money we owe her for the suit we are wearing, money which she needs to pay her rent and the wages of her assistants, is only possible when we are blinded by lack of imagination.

Cruelty is due in a large measure to lack of imagination and its common excuse is: "I did not realise how it would hurt." From the unconscious brutality

of children who pull off flies' wings to the deliberate hardening of the heart of Dives who is disgusted by the sight of Lazarus, all degrees of cruelty are due to lack of or stifling of imagination. The civilised world condemns cruelty and insists that even murderers shall undergo death with the minimum of physical pain, but it is only the cruder and more visible manifestations which shock us. The cruelty of ridicule of the sensitive, of self-absorption at an evening party, of triumph over the down-trodden, still subtly thwarts the helpfulness of our action.

Conceit is another child of obtuseness, for with any width of imagination we should easily see our relatively minute place in the whole. To find the most humble men we must seek them among the greatest, the glory of whose ideal shelters them from any vain imaginings. It is only when we are near-sighted that we can be conceited.

It would be easy also to find close connections between lack of imagination and such faults as obstinacy, dishonesty, prejudice, laziness and heedlessness, but it is enough here to point out how sordid and resourceless lack of imagination leaves a man and therefore how easily he slips into pettiness of judgment and of act.

Shelley's ringing words: "A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively," reveal to us more truth with every experience. The man of little imagination may plod along doing about what is expected of him, but he can never be greatly good. Thousands of iridescent opportunities open for a mo-

ment like a rainbow before him, but he sees only the dust on the road. The baby is just a baby to him and he never thinks of its approaching manhood. So the pauper is only a pauper and he is blind to the revelation of patient endurance and courage under hardships. Corruption in business or politics is to him an inevitable state of things instead of a war-cry to citizenship, and even the liberality of the rich becomes an excuse for niggardliness. Everywhere he misses the sight of the delicate opportunities which pass swiftly as the shadow of a bird's wing in flight. He is like Wordsworth's Peter Bell:

> "A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him
> And it was nothing more."

Nothing more! What might not that primrose have been to the seeking eye of the poet, the artist, the philosopher, the traveller? A symbol of light, of the coming of spring, a flash of golden hope, a gift for a sick child, an early memory whose vividness clouded the present, the flame that lighted a poem. We talk of taking things as they *are*, but our keenest imagination cannot begin to picture all that they are.

We need none of us be Peter Bells if we are once aware of the danger. The crannies of imagination which everyone possesses can be enlarged by the growth of live interests that push even walls of stone aside. When we observe a tired woman holding on to the car strap, or watch a child wistfully eyeing a doll, or a small boy rubbing his hands in the hope of looking

like a candidate for the baseball team, we are nurturing already a seedling of imagination which may become a constant source of helpfulness and pleasure. Imagination is not the effort to reach the far-off, it is the power of really getting at what is near so that we help it to grow instead of stepping on it.

"These clumsy feet still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end,
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept,
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say,
Who knows how grandly it had rung?"[2]

## IV

The imaginative man is often taunted with being unpractical, largely perhaps because the man without imagination is not clear-sighted enough to see how many impracticable things his dulness leads him into. I have tried to show that imagination is a most practical and essential quality, so that no work except that which is purely mechanical like knitting or stone-breaking can be well done without it. But to say that imagination is a practical necessity is not to say that it is without danger. Like electricity, it must be controlled, and used at the right time and in the right way.

There are times when for the sake of doing our best in an arithmetic examination, we must not let ourselves wander off into vivid imagination of what we

[2] "The Fool's Prayer," Edward Rowland Sill.

shall do in vacation. When asked what number four apples added to six apples will give, we cannot answer as quickly if at the same time we are picturing the redness and juiciness of the apples.

Part of the time we necessarily use a form of shorthand, such as arithmetic, in order to have time for the free use of our imagination in more important things. As electricity when beyond our control may destroy life or expend itself in fleeting lightning flashes, so uncontrolled imagination may shatter steady work into splinters; yet this is not to say that imagination is to be avoided, but that like all power, it needs guidance, the guidance of our purpose.

# CHAPTER XV

## MEMORY

### I

Emerson calls memory the thread on which the beads of man's life are strung,[1] for as a necklace is no necklace without the thread which holds the beads together, so man's life is not a human life without the uniting thread of memory which holds our plans and ideas from scattering irretrievably.

Suppose each word of a sentence dropped into oblivion before you heard the next:

Will...you...come...to...dine...with...me?
Let..us..have..faith..that..right..makes..might.

The most trivial and the noblest ideas are alike meaningless unless we can remember their sequence. We are always holding words together by the thread of memory, and it is only because we are accustomed to the process that we do not realise how wonderful is this linking of words, sounds or gestures into an enduring meaning. The most exquisite phrase of music, the most moving oration would be nothing unless we could hold what is past as still present in our thought. We feel this at times when a person speaks so slowly that we almost forget with what idea he began the sentence. The speech loses all significance.

[1] R. W. Emerson, "Works," vol. xii. p. 63, Riverside Edition.

Though it is true that we may have physical life without memory, yet without memory we are not human, for memory is necessary to moral life. Mrs. Bosanquet, writing of London conditions, tells us of men there who never work until they have spent their last cent and exhausted all credit.

"In the place of foresight we find the happy faith that something will turn up, and instead of self-control, the impulsive recklessness which may lead indifferently to a prodigal generosity or an almost inconceivable selfishness.

"The true type of this class lives in the present moment only,—not only is he without foresight—he is almost without memory in the sense that his past is so completely past that he has no more organised experience than a child. Hence his life is one incoherent jumble from beginning to end; it would be impossible to make even a connected story of it, for every day merely repeats the mistakes, follies and mishaps of yesterday; all is aimless and drifting." [2]

But though it is only when we have memory that human life is open to us, much of our memory is not an attainment, but an inheritance or a habit, just as the apparent courage of a rope-walker may be due either to physical fearlessness or to endless repetition which has made him callous or secure. What concerns us here is not the possession, but the winning and using of memory as the builder of steady and progressive life; hence we shall pass over all the cases of parrot-like memory and of memory due to repetition and speak only of moral memory won by love and thought.

[2] "Aspects of the Social Problem," p. 83.

II

A young truant who came in an hour late to his music lesson was asked by his teacher: "Did you forget your lesson?" "No," he replied with uncommon accuracy, "I did not forget the lesson, but I forgot the importance of it."

Memory, as the power effectively to recall, to hold steady the importance of what we do and think in relation to our growing aim, is the centre from which virtue radiates; sin is letting go or shoving aside the intrusive monitor. Broken New Year's resolutions have been made the subject of so many jests that the very name has a farcical sound. Why does the drunkard almost never hold to the vow he makes? For lack both of memory and imagination. At the time he makes the vow he does not vividly picture the coming temptation of having his comrades on a freezing night urge him to enter the brilliant, warm saloon, and so he promises more than he can perform. Again when the temptation comes, instead of recalling vividly his vow, he pushes it aside and says: "We'll not count it for this once." But as Professor James wisely remarks: "The man may not count it, but it is being counted nevertheless.[3] It is stored up against him when the next temptation comes, for every slip makes the next easier.

So New Year's resolutions are apt to be made suddenly and without memory of the significance of our past failures. It is no more likely that we shall by a

[3] Wm. James, "Talks to Teachers," p. 77.

sudden vow overcome the habit of laziness than that an equally fervid vow would enable us to jump a twenty-foot chasm without a fall. With time and labour we can build a bridge across the chasm, and with time and labour we can gain the habit of work. The resolution is good only when it lays the cornerstone for the bridge. Our resolutions should be few, definite and attainable without leaps. We should never make a resolution without trying to picture the difficulty of keeping it, nor break one without trying to remember why we made it.

The difference between the life of a person of constant memory and that of the forgetful person, will be shown in all that each of them does. The forgetful person is easily discouraged; "he has his ups and downs," as we say. Of course he has, for he goes tumbling down the dale instead of crossing the valley by the bridge of memory. The same characteristic that makes him easily disheartened or elated inclines him to be conceited. When his hour of triumph comes, he has forgotten the great men who have built the high-roads over which he has trodden, and takes the whole credit to himself. He is often half-consciously cruel. "I forgot that you would mind if I said that," is his invalid excuse. He easily loses his temper or acts with foolhardy assurance, for he forgets that there are two sides to a question. He is, of course, careless. He does not know where his papers are because he forgot where he threw them down. He is disloyal, for he lets the memory of the help promised to his friend fade away in an engrossing present.

These faults are special symptoms of a disease which, like consumption, is wasting his life. He cannot form or execute any far-reaching plan, for before he has gone far, he has forgotten what it stood for and is tempted to abandon it. Without a dogged memory of his aim, Columbus could never have persisted on his voyage when the taunts of his sailors and the agony of long delay drove hope away.

The forgetful man is a prey to temptation, for he flutters before it helpless and fascinated by its snake-like glitter, instead of rising on wings of recollection and piercing his tormentor with the keen power of an enduring aim. It is the person without memory who has the fatal incapacity for saying "no"; the present is like a wall shutting out both his past and his future.

Nor is it only, or mainly, through positive wrong-doing that forgetfulness dwarfs and deforms our lives. Through the callousness due to lack of memory we miss the light touches of new opportunity.

Sometimes when facing a hard and critical decision, a boy will look round on the passive faces of his elders and remember that they too have been through hard struggles, have made a decision quite parallel to the one which now makes the world like cloud-drift to him. Oh, for their experience of how the battle was won! But he rarely asks them, and if he does they rarely help him. Alas! they have forgotten the steps, forgotten the vivid, engrossing nature of their past, just as we forget the burning reality of persons who are far from us. It is lost, memory has not held it, imagination cannot resuscitate it, and so they

cannot help us in our fight. Every man must go wearily on bearing his own burden. Between the time of our despair and that of our success there is a gulf of forgetfulness. We take up our bridges after us and throw them away, so that when we meet a similar difficulty or hear a voice calling for help from the other side, we know not the way to cross.

"I forgot, I forgot," is the cry of every sin. This is why Kipling, in the "Recessional," hammers in the need of memory. The people in their triumph and their scorn of the vanquished are in awful peril.

> "The tumult and the shouting dies,
> The captains and the kings depart,
> Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
> An humble and a contrite heart.
> Lord God of Hosts be with us yet,
> Lest we forget,—lest we forget!"

III

To realise the importance of memory is instantly to ask: "How can we hold and increase our power of recollection?" We are guided in the right direction by the answer to a second question: "What things do we remember?" We remember anything which is often repeated or with which we have many associations. When an act is often repeated it is indeed something far below our consciousness that remembers; we go to school or return to lunch by an impulse so inevitable that only the very dreamy can claim any effort of memory in the accomplishment. Such memory con-

cerns us here only when we deliberately repeat an act in order to remember it.

Memory gained through association is more within our power. The historian cannot forget the date of the French Revolution or who succeeded Louis Napoleon because it is connected in his mind with so many allied facts, but the little peaks of isolated and miscellaneous information which are all that to many of us stand out in French history, are easily levelled by the attrition of time. Memory of this type is largely within our control through the making and tracing of associations.

Everyone has had the experience of trying to remember something he had forgotten. "What was the name of that woman?" or "What was that brilliant idea I had last night?" We at once try in a dim way to recall something associated with the thing we are trying to remember. We have a faint idea of where we saw the woman or had the idea, then perhaps of what we were talking about. We dismiss some ideas or names as clearly not what we are seeking and welcome others as "warm." "Oh, it was at the dinner table and Henry was talking about John Hare and I said:" . . . Out comes my brilliant idea. "We make search in our memory for a forgotten idea just as we rummage our house for a lost object. In both cases we visit what seems to us the probable *neighbourhood* of that which we miss. We turn over the things under which, or within which, or alongside of which it may possibly be; and if it lies near them it soon comes to view."[4]

[4] Wm. James, "Psychology," vol. i., p. 654.

Even an artificial association is often of help, and this is why we direct our attention to what we fear to forget by tying a string round our finger or a knot in our handkerchief. We have all had the sad experience of remembering that the knot meant something, but not in the least remembering what it meant, an experience which brings out the fact that orderly and logical connection is a far surer help than artificial association.

But the kernel of living memory is not in these shells of repetition and association or even of logical sequence, but in the centre from which all conduct radiates,—a vivid interest. The boy who cannot conceive of remembering the difference between the divisor and the dividend, scorns anyone who cannot remember the difference between the quarter-back and the tackle, and the absent-minded girl who forgets to come in at six, will be very present-minded in remembering that there is to be a dance at nine. Hence the sovereign perscription for forgetfulness is: Take an undiluted interest, the hotter the better, in anything you tend to forget. Put your vivid imagination into it and shove aside other intruding ideas. If it is not of native interest, cultivate it in the soil of allied interest.

How often we drift in to hear a lecture and drift out again at the end with a few shreds of information clinging to us for a week or two, but no more ours than the threads which we brush off our coats. If you are to go to-night to a lecture on Afghanistan and want to come out a possessor and not a mere re-

cipient, you can do it. A nest is needed for young ideas; we must prepare it beforehand by thinking over our knowledge of the subject, by asking what it is that we hope to find out and perhaps by reading some article that will whet our interest. Afghanistan must be for the time our greatest concern. We must avoid the tendency to turn our head to watch the janitor as, in his creaking boots, he tiptoes up to open a window or to notice the very large hands of the lecturer, and even the thought: "Oh! I entirely forgot to call up Henry on the telephone," must be suppressed. We can make a mental outline of the important points, talk it over with some wiser friend and make a summary of what we remember. Then even the most scatter-brained may glean a little harvest. Forethought, resolute interest, and definite recall, these are the guides to memory.

IV

We have already seen that exclusion is one important side of memory, and necessarily so, for without the power to exclude, we become like a stream without any banks; in a freshet it will go scattering its water in myriad rivulets over all the plain. The duty of forgetting is an aspect of the duty of memory, and as little to be left to chance.

The question what and when shall we exclude is part of the question what shall we remember. In the first place a mind burdened with trivial and disconnected facts is not a help to itself or to others. Note-

books are of real service here to free memory from the clogging of detail. The shopper with her list in her bag is a far more agreeable person to meet than the shopper who is endeavouring at once to express her joy in seeing you and to recall what it was she meant to buy at the apothecary's. We ought to learn to put aside trivial facts which drive out sympathy and expressiveness.

Again when we are doing any important work we must forget all else. There is a half-heartedness fatal to efficiency in the work of anyone whose whole attention is not on it. We are like motormen, steering through crowded streets and bound to go ahead; if our attention wanders from the work in hand, through daydreams or idle memories, we are unworthy of our post. In planning we live in the past and future, but in action we must live in the present.

We must forget the unpleasant and any injuries done to us only when we have learned their lesson. We must not forget any experience from which it is possible for us to gain or give help. I confided a secret to my friend and he went at once and told it to the very person concerned. It is easy for me to brood over the matter and declare that I shall never forget or forgive it; or, if I determine to be charitable, I may simply resolve to put it wholly aside. In neither case am I getting the best out of the experience. I must know why my friend was so disloyal and whether he can explain it, and if he does not realise that he has done harm, I must bear that fact in mind when I am inclined to trust in him again.

We should forget as we remember, for the sake of a true perspective. As the artist leaves out certain features of the landscape which would obscure the significance of the whole, so we must learn to put the memory of painful accidents, of disagreeable stories, of unjust gossip, of morbid moods, into its place in the background, because we need our energy for the day's work.

V

In the beginning of this chapter I used as an illustration of memory the simile of a necklace whose beads fall apart without the chain which should hold them together. So our lives fall apart without memory. The past weeks with all they have offered to us of enlightening experience die, and only the present lives. We are spendthrifts, no stock is accumulated. The next spell of "hard times" finds us as unprepared as the last. But human life is human in proportion as it remembers. Then, instead of dying away, it wins integrity and transcends time, for it holds together on a single thread the joys and sorrows, the failures and successes, the beauty and the ugliness, the activity and repose won from experience. The man who thus remembers is the man of wisdom.

Lincoln, our shrewd, humorous, tender, patient, wise, forgiving president, was a man who remembered. Day by day, in spite of the uproar of politicians and the agony of disaster, he held to the memory of his single purpose to save the Union. In the struggle with an appalling problem, he did not forget the restoring play

of the ludicrous nor did his lightest mood pass without a hint of deeper suggestion. No insult could make him bitter, for he remembered the good in the evil; no stress of circumstances could make him less tender to the deserter, for: "I never felt sure but I might drop my gun and run away if I found myself in line of battle." In the time of popular exultation at the capture of Mason and Slidell, he held to the calm view of the rights of neutrals. Above all, his memory kept him perennially patient against the clamour of those who sought a victory through words. "Gentlemen," he said to some excited Westerners, "suppose all the property you were worth was in gold and you had put it all in the hands of Blondin to carry across the Niagara River on a rope. Would you shake the cable or keep shouting at him: 'Blondin, stand up a little straighter; Blondin, stoop a little more, go a little faster—lean a little more to the north—lean a little more to the south—'? No, you would hold your breath as well as your tongue and keep your hands off till he was safe over. The Government is carrying an enormous weight. Untold treasures are in their hands, they are doing the very best they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence and we will get you safe across."[5] Rooted in Lincoln's nature was living memory, spreading and holding firmer every day through the intensity of his interest, and of his passion to understand.

If anyone of us says to himself: "But this is Lincoln, and I cannot do great things," I should reply:

[5] Ida Tarbell, "Life of Abraham Lincoln," vol. ii. p. 93.

and threats of the other jurors is justified and applauded.

But it is one thing to say that Eli was wholly right to trust to his feelings in this case, and another to say that feeling is a valid and sufficient guide. The story brings us to the kernel of the question of the relation between thought and feeling. First of all we have to distinguish between impulse and the instinct born of long experience. Many of us have sudden impulses and if we should trace their results, we should find them quite as apt to be wrong as right. We have impulses to run away when there is nothing to be afraid of, impulses to be annoyed with some kind person just because we have indigestion. Often a little thought will make us see how foolish these impulses are, although at the time they were so self-assertive. On the other hand there are instincts really due to strong subconscious evidence based on long and intimate experience.

Eli had really good reasons for an apparently arbitrary act. The evidence was all circumstantial, not direct. He knew John Wood's character through and through; it had been tested by hard trials; it shone forth in unselfish acts. Character does not reverse itself in a day, and nothing, except possibly Wood's own confession, could have convinced Eli of his guilt. Eli was entirely right; we are all fortunate enough to have friends of whom our knowledge is so intimate that nothing can make us doubt. Their integrity is as sure as to-morrow's sunrise.

But Eli's overwhelming and valid conviction was significant only to himself, and this is the root-difficulty

of all feeling. He appealed to a deep-seated but unanalysable instinct. "When you tell me how that cat inquired his way home, I'll tell you how I know John Wood ain't guilty."

We all have similar instincts based in many cases on something valid, but they do not convince anyone else. If when you are blindfolded something is put into your hand, you may feel and feel it till you are sure it is a diamond. It may be actually worthless and in any case you have no convincing knowledge until the diamond is tested. In the same way your feeling against some person may be a priceless clue to conduct, but as long as it is only feeling, there is no way of testing its value.

Hegel, one of the greatest of modern philosophers, felt keenly this difficulty in the nature of feeling. He says: "It frequently happens that a man appeals to feeling when reasons fail. Such a man *must be left to himself*, for, with the appeal to his own feeling, the community between us is broken off." So Eli, relying only on his feeling, was cut off from communication with the other jurors. If Eli could have made vivid to the jury the long, full years in which Wood had been trusted and faithful, the temptations under which he had shown a scrupulous honesty, if he had told of Wood's perfect unselfishness in every human relation, he might have convinced them that Wood should not be condemned without direct and absolute proof. But it is the fatal weakness of feelings, too indefinite to find expression, that they are unconvincing, except to those who already agree. If the real culprit

had not confessed there would have been an endless deadlock unless Eli could have translated his inarticulate feeling into convincing arguments.

A second difficulty arises from the same cause. Feelings which are not carefully thought out and expressed, are liable some day to grow cold and die. Just as your inarticulate feeling cannot move the cold outsider, so the knowledge that you *once* felt hot cannot make you glow when your mood is wintry. When you first hear from the lips of Pundita Ramabai about the needs of the starving in India, you may feel that it is to their relief that you must devote your life; but unless you have carefully and calmly thought it out, the vivid impression will fade and the remembrance of all that you must sacrifice will crowd out that emotional impulse.

This is what happened in a charity sermon described, I think, by Mark Twain. When the preacher had poured out his eloquence for fifteen minutes, one of his hearers was moved to give all he possessed; half an hour later, as the sermon went on, he meditated a small, reasonable contribution, and by the end of an hour, he had grown icy and declared: "I won't give a cent."

Thought, like solid metal, gives endurance to the heat of feeling which without it would quickly radiate away.

II

It is a very common and disastrous tendency in human nature to act as though the world was built on the

principle of a pair of scales, so that whatever raised one side of any question must necessarily lower the other. If you like the country it is often assumed that you must dislike the city; if you delight in society that you must abhor solitude. Misled by a similar fallacy, people are wont to suppose that if you value thought, you must despise feeling. Fortunately, when we are asked whether we prefer head or heart we can ignore the alternative and greedily answer: "I want both!" This greediness is peculiarly essential in the question of thought and feeling: "Both always" must be our answer. Thought warmed by the heat of feeling is the only true thought, and if for any length of time we find ourselves without feeling we can be sure that we are not doing our best thinking.

It often turns out that what seems to the outsider a cold and analytical occupation is full of emotion. There is feeling in it on a different side from that at which the outsider is looking. The doctor, talking of his thirty cases of pneumonia, seems cold to the unscientific observer because he does not feel the glow of scientific experience. It is dark to us at night though elsewhere the sun is still shining.

The inseparable relation between warmth of emotion and wisdom in poise of judgment, we see in Lincoln's attitude toward emancipation. He was indeed accused of coldness regarding it; the Abolitionists did not see that he was dealing with a larger cause, the salvation of the Union, in which slavery was only one element. He too thought the institution wrong,

but not to be dealt with till the time was ripe. He knew too well how quickly the good of any issue is destroyed if it is untimely born. "I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative like the Pope's bull against the comet." He was willing to resign the Presidency rather than act without conviction. Yet those who were with him in the days before the emancipation proclamation, say: "It is doubtful if Mr. Lincoln, in all his political career, ever had a measure more at heart than his scheme for Compensated Emancipation." [2]

There is the white heat of a fused purpose in Lincoln's appeal to Congress for the acceptance of his plan for emancipation with compensation. "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise to meet it. As our case is new so must we think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves and then we shall save our country." [3]

We see always in men of Lincoln's calibre how intimate and inseparable are thought and emotion. At a distance we may be struck either by their marvellous instinct for the right word and act or by their extraordinarily keen analysis. Seen more closely we behold the intricate interweaving of both. The intuition which looked like a miraculous air plant, turns out to have roots in a long training, and the keen analysis is one aspect only of an intense but controlled emotion. The subjects on which we have pondered most are often those in regard to which we feel the

[2] "Life of Lincoln," Ida Tarbell, vol. ii., p. 111.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

most, but our feeling is held steady by the weight of solid experience instead of being so light that the breath of a changing mood can puff it here and there.

It follows then that in no subject should we trust to feeling alone, because, as we have seen, feeling without thought is inarticulate, evanescent, and often misleading. It was a warm impulse which moved Congress to give the full right of suffrage to the whole negro race after the Civil War, but because the probable consequences had not been carefully faced, the generous act turned out a curse. So it was when the chivalric young Shelley offered to marry Harriet Westbrook in order to save her from being forced by her father to go back to school. He acted on feeling without facing the consequences and so brought misery to both their lives.

A short time ago it was popularly believed that in questions of philanthropy, all one needed was to trust to one's kindly impulses. It has been a lesson slowly and painfully learned, that this is not true. If you give money to the shivering child selling matches in a snowstorm, ten more children will be out offering matches for sale in the next snowstorm. If you lend money to all who ask a loan, you will destroy someone's energy and his self-respect. In all such cases you must think just as hard and sympathetically as you can; you must put both feeling and thought into your task,—feeling to make all the facts really vivid, and thought to make the decision wise and lasting in its effect.

Not even in art can we glean the most merely by

trusting our first instinct of admiration or dislike. People object to analysing a beautiful picture or moving scene and to a certain extent their instinct is right. If we are to handle delicate and beautiful things we must handle them with sensitive touch. Nevertheless the helplessness of pure feeling is at once evident. You care very much for a symphony by Beethoven and your friend does not. How are you to help her to appreciate it? Feeling meets feeling and both are powerless, but if you find out why you like the symphony, what passages in it especially move you, what there is in common between the music you enjoy and that which she likes, or even how the beauty you find in music is parallel to that which she finds in a running brook or a leaping horse, you may help her to see what you mean. Then if she listens hard she may hear what will give her joy. The experience of being thus convinced is a valuable one.

Some people like and some people dislike the Puvis de Chavannes frescoes in the Boston Public Library. At first they seemed to me cold, trivial and artificial, unworthy of the dignity of the library. One day I made this criticism to a friend who said: "You are looking for the wrong thing in those pictures; they are not expressive of high moral ideals nor of realistic scenery. They are primarily decorative. See the wonderful sweep and lightness of the drapery, the upward floating of the figures, the dreaminess of the spring sky." Now when I see them I am aware of this beauty. By putting his meaning into words, my friend enlightened and enriched me.

In the closer and more subtle questions of love and of religion, the same truth holds. In both we rightly resent the crude destructive interference of an unsympathetic outsider; we know that all we can put into words would be at best a tiny fragment of what our love or our religion stands for. Yet in both we are in great danger if we depend on feeling alone.

Amiel says: "Women wish to be loved without a why or wherefore; not because they are pretty or wise or good, but because they are themselves."

The real meaning of the desire to be loved for yourself is the true instinct, to be loved not for any *part* of yourself nor for anything you are just for the moment and so may outgrow, nor for the sum of yourself added bit by bit in a mechanical aggregate, but for the *whole* of yourself. Yet to be loved for the whole of yourself is not to be loved without reason. It is to be loved with mind and strength as well as with all one's heart. To be loved without a *why* or *wherefore* is very dangerous. Many a mother loves her son in such a way. Mrs. Bosanquet [4] tells of an adoring widow whose whole hopes centred on her boy, to whom she gave a good education and for whom she secured a position in a lawyer's office. He squandered away all her money and drank himself to death. If she had loved him with an intelligent love, she could have guarded against his weakness and she might have saved him.

We love best what we know most comprehendingly. Sometimes after his death, we write a life of our best

[4] "Aspects of the Social Problem," p. 125.

friend and put into words all that we can convey of his character. It is not the whole of him, something eludes us as we watch it and there is much we can never put into words. Nevertheless we know our friend not less well but far better because we have tried from the glowing centre of a great love to follow the radii of his life. Dry, cold analysis is of course out of place here, because it is untrue. So is the premature forcing of emotion into expression. The only place for abstract, cold thinking is in processes like arithmetic, a temporary shorthand that never mistakes its figures for the realities they represent.

III

We need, however, to distinguish two ideas which are often confused: *trust in thought* and *trust in speech*. A good many of us are untrained in the control of words and they entangle our ideas as did the words of Mr. Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss": "No, Bessie, I didn't just mean the mole. I meant it to stand for summat else, but never mind, it's puzzling work, talking is. Things have got so twisted round and wrapt up in unreasonable words, that aren't a bit like 'em, as I'm clean at fault often and often. Everything winds about so, the more straightforward you are, the worse you're puzzled."

I have no doubt that Mr. Tulliver's feeling went far beyond what it was possible to him to convey in words to his prosaic wife, who must have everything put down in black and white.

And so it is with more educated people when first they touch a new experience. "Things that cannot be said look eloquently through the eyes, and touch is almost a necessity for conveying the tenderest affection," while there are many things too subtle to be said as yet, or perhaps ever, except in music or drawing. But we must remember that music and painting are as much a language as words, a more subtle language, and therefore more adapted accurately to express the most delicate ideas. When drawing and music are treated not merely as the property of the gifted, but as important means of expression for everyone, they will become more and more a general possession and give us all an opportunity to express clearly what as yet we feel but dimly.

It is not only in conveying what is subtle or uplifted that our speech is inadequate. Try to describe a crotchet stitch or a mashie stroke to one who has never seen such things and you are entirely at a loss. So an engineer without his paper and pencil feels as helpless to express his knowledge as a stutterer in speech. We all begin to draw with forks on the table cloth when questions of location arise and we nearly all stumble in directing a man even three or four blocks. These facts are interesting because they tend to show that it is not always lack of thought or of reality behind our feeling that makes us shrink from expression, but rather a lack of the fitting medium. The richness and variety of life cannot be cramped into any one language and especially not into speech.

"Life goes before us, infinite in complication, attended by the most various and surprising meteors, appealing at once to the eye, to the ear, to the mind,—the seat of wonder,—to the touch, so thrillingly delicate, and to the belly so imperious when starved. It combines and employs in its manifestation the method and material not of one art only, but of all the arts. Music is but an arbitrary trifling with a few of life's majestic chords; painting is but a shadow of its pageantry of light and colour; literature does but drily indicate that wealth of incident, of moral obligation, of virtue, vice, action, rapture, and agony with which it teems.

"To compete with the flavour of wine, the beauty of the dawn, the scorching of fire, the bitterness of death and separation, here are indeed labours for a Hercules in a dress coat armed with a pen and a dictionary to depict the passions." [5]

"We have not enough speech to tell the tenth part of our feelings. Let him who doubts this recall one of his own vain attempts to convey what made the oddest of dreams entrancing in loveliness, to convey that aroma of thought, the conscious absence of which made him a fool in his own eyes when he spoke such silly words as alone presented themselves for the service. I can no more describe the emotion aroused in my mind by a grey cloud parting over a grey stone, by the smell of a sweet pea, by a long pennon of striped grass, than I can tell what the glory of God is. The man whose poetry is like nature in that it produces individual, incommunicable moods, a sense of elevated, tender, marvellous and evanescent existence, must be a poet indeed.

"Every dawn of such feeling is a light-brushed bubble, rendering visible for a moment the dark sea of our being which lies beyond the lights of our consciousness and is the stuff and region of our eternal growth." [6]

[5] R. L. Stevenson, "Memoirs and Portraits," p. 281.

[6] George MacDonald, "Robert Falconer," p. 215.

*The stuff and region of our growth!* I want to pause a moment on this, for it indicates one important reason for the common deep reverence for feeling and also a clear suggestion of its essential relation to thought. It is because we are growing that we cannot put everything into expression. It is only the complete that can be fully stated. When we feel strongly without power of adequate expression, it may well be because we are just touching the hem of the garment of a new insight. We are right to wait till it comes more within our grasp. But it is no less true that these visions of the beyond will fade away unless we try more and more to draw them into expression, for it is by the expression of the seemingly inexpressible that advance is made. The very poets who uphold the supremacy of feeling have put into words what no one had dared to imagine could be said, and thus the gropings of one generation bring the next into the sunlight.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THOUGHT AND ACTION

I

At the time of the Spanish War there was printed a little pamphlet called: "A Message to Garcia," [1] which ran like wildfire from person to person, spreading its spark of eagerly welcomed truth.

The central figure of the story is Rowan, who carried the message and the situation is briefly this: "When the war between Spain and the United States broke out, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountains of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail or telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his coöperation and quickly."

At this critical moment Rowan was thought of and sent for by President McKinley. He was given a letter to Garcia with the simple command to deliver it as quickly as possible. Rowan took the letter without a word, "sealed it up in an oilskin pouch, strapped it over his heart, within four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle and in three weeks came out on the other side of the island, having traversed a hostile country on foot and delivered his letter to Garcia."

[1] "A Message to Garcia," by Elbert Hubbard, Roycroft Press, 1899.

The essence of the story is in the instant and silent acceptance of the mission and its loyal fulfilment. Hubbard points out that these qualities are rare and illustrates it thus: "You, reader, put this matter to a test. You are sitting in your office—six clerks are within call. Summon any one and make this request: 'Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Corregio.' Will the clerk quickly say: 'Yes, sir,' and go do the task? On your life he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye and ask one or more of the following questions: 'Who was he? Which encyclopedia? Where is the encyclopedia? Was I hired for that? Don't you mean Bismarck? What's the matter with Charlie doing it? Is he dead? Is there any hurry? Shan't I bring you the book and let you look it up yourself? What do you want to know for?' And I will lay you ten to one that after you have answered the questions and explained how and where to find the information and why you want it, the clerk will go off and get one of the other clerks to help him try to find Garcia and then come back and tell you there is no such man."

Don't argue about it; go and do it. That is the pointed significance of this tale. We make, however, a wrong application of the story if we take it to mean that all work should be begun at once and without planning. We all know the person who acts without thinking and the mess he makes of it. If I have a hem to turn or a window-pane to fit, it does not pay to start in at once and do it, for if I do it with-

out careful planning, it is more than likely that I shall have to do it all over again or that it will take me far longer than is necessary. Nothing that has not become mechanical or instinctive can be well done without thought.

But though the "Message to Garcia" may seem to urge action rather than thought, what it really encourages is *thoughtful action*—action that meets new difficulties and improvises undiscouraged a new way of meeting each, action that has some originality in it and much dogged refusal to take no for an answer when circumstances try to refuse our passage onward.

On the hospital ship *Bay State,* which sailed from Boston to Porto Rico in September, 1898, to bring home sick and wounded soldiers, there were a number of young doctors under the direction of Dr. Herbert L. Burrell. As the ship neared Porto Rico it was found that everything had been packed in the hold without any inventory or any system. There were provisions, stores of medicine, bandages, instruments, and they were mixed indiscriminately. It was absolutely necessary, not only to know where each article was, but to arrange them so that they could be conveniently distributed at each port at which the ship was to stop and enough kept in reserve for the needs of the sick soldiers on the homeward voyage. It was intensely hot in the hold, but the young doctors, who were chafing for work, at once proposed to "fall on the job." "No," said Dr. Burrell, "sit down and keep still," and he himself sat down at a table and apparently did nothing for half an hour,

while the assistants inwardly fretted at the delay. At the end of that time, however, he had a careful plan of action, which saved not only time, but strength and labour. Each man was ordered to dress in the coolest of pajamas, to take charge of a single compartment, to leave the heavy lifting to the corps of sailors, to shout out the list of articles to the nurse at the top of the stairs, and to come up on deck every half hour for air.

This type of deliberate planning seems at first almost in opposition to Rowan's swift, leopard-like spring into the jungle, but there is less difference than there seems. Both Rowan and the doctor did instantly and accurately what was necessary to do, and nothing else. Rowan acted alone, and therefore kept to himself the planning. Dr. Burrell acted as the leader of a group. It is true that Rowan's mind was on its way to Cuba as soon as the message was given, but so was Dr. Burrell's on his task. The situation, and therefore the act, was different, but the striking likeness is in the questions each did *not* ask. The clerk who was requested to write about Corregio asked not pertinent, but impertinent, questions. He used the questions as a buffer to protect him from the weight of his own job and to put off the labour of thinking. He wanted someone else to use his mind for him and hand over the results. He was not thinking, but shirking, because he was unwilling "to take hold and lift."

It is not action without thought that is commended in Elbert Hubbard's sketch, but action without evasion.

II

There are undoubtedly times, however, when we ought to act without *fresh* thought. Many of these are cases in which our action must be instant to be effective, and where long habit has trained us to do almost automatically what is needed. When the engineer sees a train approaching his on the same track, he has reversed the engine and blown the whistle almost before any thought can move him. But when such an act is reasonable it is guided by past experience which at one time was deliberate and conscious. He who acts rightly in an emergency is not the haphazard man who follows the impulse born of the moment, but the man whose experience is within his grasp so that in an instant he can call the required portion into service.

In any emergency we have to trust largely to the guidance of our past, and according as that past has been brave or cowardly, generous or selfish, thoughtful or careless, so will our act be. It is therefore true that our acts in crises are prepared for, though not at the instant of action. Those who use thought in every-day life are those who show its influence in an emergency.

Action without fresh thought is imperative when we have once definitely decided that our path is the right one. There is never any end to what may be said on each side of a question, nor to the new evidence that *may* come up. But in any decision there comes a time when the value of the new evidence that slowly

dribbles in is outweighed by the gain of sturdy action. Even a partially wrong decision becomes more fruitful than further hesitation. We can make stepping-stones of our mistakes, but indecision is a crumbling structure on which we cannot climb anywhere. The length of time rightly spent in securing and weighing evidence differs in each case, but the same principle holds. There is always the danger of going off at halfcock and of never going off at all. In shooting, we aim with utmost care, and then there comes a moment when we must aim no more, but pull the trigger. In drawing, we look at our subject and think how best to express its beauty, but if the lines are to be true they must be drawn at last with a swift decisive movement.

So it is in all moral decisions. "I need to earn money to support my mother," a boy writes to me. "Ought I to go through the high school, and so be fitted to earn a larger salary, or ought I to go to work with only the grammar school training?" It is a very important decision. The letter is signed, "Anxiously yours." I must turn to the largest supply of facts I can glean; carefully weigh the opportunity and the pressure of need, and then put my ingenuity into getting the best out of the situation. The balance may be almost even and the decision consequently very difficult, but in that case also there comes a time when the value of energetic action in either direction outweighs that of any new evidence; then the decision, right or wrong, must be made.

Hamlet is an extreme example of waste of energy in rehearsing a decision after it is clearly made. His

speech to Horatio (Act III, Scene 2) expresses touchingly his sense of his own lack:

> "Blessed are those whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
> That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger to play what stop she will."

Horatio has what Hamlet lacks, steady emotion controlled by sensible thought. Hamlet alternates between brooding inaction and bursts of wild excitement.

In Hamlet thought degenerated into worry. He knew that he had evidence enough, yet he returned to the old question. Thought goes straight ahead, slowly or swiftly, but worry returns on itself in a vicious circle. "I wonder whether I really can jump that brook." I measure it with my eyes, compare it with other jumps, and decide that I can. Then the old doubt arises: "Suppose it is wider than I think." There is no end to a circle, and no end to the circular process of worry except by a clean jump across the brook of doubt. "Look before you leap," but not after you have decided to leap nor while you are leaping.

Of course, some of us are born happy-go-lucky, others unhappily timorous, and each has to learn by experience his own proper time-exposure to the light of reflection, but it holds throughout that trifles should be quickly and, if necessary, arbitrarily decided so that we may make liberal expenditure of time and strength on important questions. If your house lies on B Street, midway between A Street and C Street, the decision whether to leave the electric car at A Street or at C

Street must be arbitrarily made. What dress shall I wear? What pudding shall I order? What word shall I write? Which road shall I take? Indecision over such questions is often a sign of weakness or fatigue, and the decision becomes more mountainous the more we look at it. To turn away for a time or to act without further consideration is then the sensible course.

It is then true that:

(1) In emergencies,

(2) When decisions have been carefully made and no really enlightening new evidence is visible,

(3) In trifling decisions,

(4) In all cases wherein thought has degenerated into worry,

we ought to bring our will to bear and stop thinking.

III

Some people would insist here that thought should also be avoided when it might bring unhappiness. The old proverb, "where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise," is commonly accepted as true, yet its validity depends wholly on the concealed implication that bliss is the most desirable end. It does not hold for anyone who prefers activity, advance or helpfulness to bliss; therefore as soon as we look into the life of anyone who has counted in the world's work, the force of the proverb is shattered. We cannot conceive that Lincoln would prefer the bliss of ignorance to the aching strain of his effort to preserve the Union, or that Florence Nightingale would prefer the con-

tentment that came from not knowing the condition of the wounded to the agony and the joy of caring for them.

Put in the scales the bliss of ignorance against the insight of growth or the opportunity of service, and bliss is found utterly wanting. To shut in bliss by the barrier of ignorance is to any growing nature an insult, for one of the great experiences which, till we reach it, seems self-contradictory, is the joy of awakening to a painful discovery of our past mistakes, because through being known they can be overcome.

It is clear then that the bliss of ignorance is not to be desired, when by knowledge we can advance faster or be of service. I may be very happily reading by the pond where a child is in danger of drowning, but though it interrupts my contentment, I do not hesitate to prefer the struggle and anxiety that comes from the effort to rescue him.

The question is harder in cases where the coming of knowledge means the shattering of the shell of past contentment and does not make apparent the growth of any stronger and larger protection. A country girl from a simple home is invited to visit rich relatives in a large city. There she comes suddenly face to face with a life fuller than she had ever dreamed of. On all sides of her are opportunities for study, for society, for beauty, and the luxury to which she has been unaccustomed has a double charm. She realises that her clothes, which once seemed superb and all-sufficing, are cheap and unfashionable, that her ideas are crude and badly expressed. Is it really gain for such a

girl to have this knowledge, which crushes the bliss of her ignorance? It is not, of course, possible to give any answer to such a question without a thorough understanding of the girl's surroundings. A test of gain or loss may be made by measuring the degree to which such a girl can carry her new insight with her to enrich the life at home or to work out new conditions. If she can do this, even after a long struggle, the pain may be worth while; but there may be cases in which she is swamped by the flood of unattainable desires. Those who by opening new inlets break up the charm of the narrow outlook must always remember that they are bound not to drop the helm until the boat is safely steered into wider channels. It is better to give a girl no new experience than to drop her in its bewilderment before she can get her bearings.

The amount of knowledge that we can stand at any time must vary with the height of our banks and the swiftness of our current. Where we have little purpose and sluggish power of reaction we can stand but little new experience, but unless we take all we can include we shall stagnate.

IV

I have already dwelt on the importance of thought in all moral life. It is always by thought that we repel temptation, because by thought we bring back to consciousness all those facts which the pressure of temptation squeezes out of sight. By thought we connect our special duty of the moment with the main current of our ideal, as a telephone operator connects our branch

wire with the main line and enables us to hear voices which before were inaudible.

A rosy-cheeked apple hangs on my neighbour's tree and the branch which bears it stretches out into my garden. With a little judicious shaking the apple will fall on my side of the fence. It looks deliciously ripe and juicy, and almost unconsciously my hand reaches out toward it. I stop myself, for I think: "It is not really mine. I shouldn't want my neighbour to steal my pears. I do not want to encourage other people to do this. Why, really, on the whole I don't want that bobbing apple. When I recollect the price, it costs too much."

It is by recollection also that I am buoyed up to do an uncongenial duty. If I fix my full attention on my desire to pass the college examinations, my natural impulse to sit on a comfortable sofa and read "Life" will be abashed. The unattractiveness of the work lay in its aloofness from the end really wanted; when I have connected the stupid means with the desired end the work is not nearly as repellent. "A moral act consists in the effort of attention by which we hold fast to an idea. . . . To think, in short, is the secret of will, just as it is the secret of memory." [2]

But here again, as we saw in discussing the "Message to Garcia," we must distinguish genuine thought from all the worthless and injurious brands that adopt the same trade-mark. Of these imitations the very worst is sophistry. There are people who can always argue themselves into the possession of plausible reasons for doing what they know is wrong:

[2] William James, "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," p. 187.

"I am going to Paris this summer to get a few dresses. We are not well off, and it is economical to buy one's clothes abroad. Yes, my father will be alone all summer, but it is excellent for him to have the quiet; I really think he needs it. It is hard for me to go away, but it is better for him not to be as dependent on me as he is, and I do it wholly for his sake."

We sometimes dignify such babblings with the name of argument, but this is as false as to say that banging seven consecutive notes on the piano is music. Sophistry takes the highest material for the basest purpose. As a medicine may be used to poison, so language may be perverted till it poisons the soul.

But if we distinguish thought from its caricature—sophistry—it is clear that there is no more reason for abandoning thought because it is sometimes perverted to sophistry than there is for abandoning food because it sometimes has poison put into it. If I learn by experience that my first impulse is apt to be right and that further reasoning tends only to delay or confuse me, I ought to act on impulse; but if, as is perhaps fully as common, the first allurement of new desire pushes out for the moment all memory of other claims, I should draw them back by swift, imaginative thought.

Each of us is unique, and the same quantity of thought can no more be prescribed for all than the same amount of exercise. If exercise becomes a strain, it should be lessened, and if thought becomes worry or sophistry it is worse than useless; nevertheless our moral, like our physical, muscles, grow firm and efficient by steady, well-regulated exercise.

# CHAPTER XIX

## TRUTH

### I

"Though the cause of evil prosper,
Yet 'tis Truth alone is strong."

Lowell wrote as he looked out prophetically on the coming struggle of the Civil War. His faith rested not alone on experience, but on the self-destroying nature of falsehood that eats away the structure of honesty on which every falsehood must rest. Falsehood is of so corrosive, so mordant a character that it cannot be carried on at all without a solid substratum of truth. The liar must speak truth most of the time, and steadily brace himself against the truthfulness of the community, else he could not successfully lie. In lying a man contradicts himself, for he has to depend for his credit on the very truth which he is at the same time destroying. He warms himself by setting his own house on fire.

We can see this principle at work everywhere. A great and flourishing institution is Tammany Hall, with its marvellously intricate and effective system of securing votes. It looks impregnable, yet just so far as it is based on corruption it is in constant danger. If the leaders of Tammany realised the irresistible power of truth they would tremble at the birth of every

child, for each may be the means of its destruction. Every knave who is jealous of it may combine against it and every honourable man will oppose it. It lives, in so far as it is evil, only through the laziness or selfishness of people who do not belong to it. When William Travers Jerome speaks out what is true concerning Tammany and concerning those who tacitly support it because they have not courage enough to be against it, the structure trembles. If the leaders attempt to strengthen it by increased bribery they really weaken it, because the whole organisation is artificial, painfully built upon corruption, intimidation and deception. The more rottenness they add the more quickly they disintegrate the internal honesty on which success depends. For this intricate system of bribery and corruption is absolutely dependent on the honesty of its members within the tribe, while at the same time it is dependent on their dishonesty toward outsiders. Its system, in so far as it is corrupt, will be destroyed either by downright honesty or downright dishonesty. Its life hangs on the trembling balance between the two. Tammany dreads alike the man who will accept no bribe and the man who will accept any bribe. The former will expose, the latter betray. When Tammany has once introduced the principle of dishonesty toward all but itself, it has sown the seeds of its own destruction. More than one can play at the game of making exceptions to truth telling, and if a member is not sure of another's loyalty to the gang the game is up.

Thus the liar always undermines by his lie that confidence on which he depends for the effectiveness of his

lie. Like the morphine habit, lying is a slow means of suicide. As soon as the reaction of distrust caused by a lie arises, lies must be given in increased doses until, through constant repetition, they become inert. The feebleness of lies in a community of liars carries its own lesson.

Contrast with this the life of an institution like the Merit System in the Public Service. In so far as its object is to obtain purity of administration, based on the motto: "Thou shalt not use public office for private gain," it is sure to triumph. Its friends, its critics, and its enemies alike will help it. Those who join it will do so from disinterested motives; it will be only the gainer by criticism, for it has nothing to hide, and the misdeeds of its enemies will only make it more evident that the great majority of men are letting themselves be defrauded for the gain of a few.

The message of truth is indelible. Every attempt to erase it only polishes more brilliantly its shining surface, every criticism of special statements of truth only writes in clearer letters the enduring message of Truth. Truth, being what *is,* is at work day and night, whether we sleep or wake; falsehood, what is *not,* is supported only by our painful effort.

II

I have tried to show the inherent weakness of all falsity and the strength of truth. If some member of an oriental state, where truth is but lightly regarded, should ask why we held it in such supreme honour, my

first answer would be: Truth is reality, and to oppose it is to buck up with our pigmy weakness against the whole order of the universe.

When we look closely at the effect of truthfulness on a community we see also that it is truth of speech and of action that holds society together and makes our complicated civilisation possible. If we could trust the honesty and veracity of no one, the vast structure of our intricate life would be shattered at a blow. We should all be milking cows, baking bread and weaving wool. Edison must leave his electrical experiments, Emerson his essay-writing, and Riis his sociology; each and all must return to the most primitive and mechanical activities.

We sometimes see gangs of labourers with an overseer whose sole occupation is to watch them. It is lack of dependence on the veracity of his gang that drives him to that wasteful expedient. In communities where no man trusts another the life of each is squandered in watching or in escaping the watchers. It is because we can depend on our milkmen, bricklayers, cooks, butchers, policemen, bank clerks, and firemen that we can carry on our special work unhampered, unworried, free. (Lies kill freedom, destroy the meaning of speech, and cut our communications.)

We are awed and fascinated by a new invention like the phonograph, but we often forget what a still more marvellous possession is language itself. From the first word of a savage to the complicated code by which a deep-sea cable bears a message of sympathy from Roosevelt to King Edward we use always this won-

derful human instrument which has made it possible for us to know the works of Shakspere and of Confucius, and links all nations by a common bond of communication. Now there is no instrument, however valuable, which may not be destroyed by misuse. As the surgeon's knife, which has saved many lives, may be spoiled by being used as a screw-driver, so language, which was made to communicate thought, may be used to conceal and pervert thought and is thus destroyed. A friend of mine, a real-estate broker, once attempted the task of redeeming the language of his trade by speaking accurately. A customer asked the price of a lot of land. The broker gave it, and added that he had had another offer for the same land and that he must decide the next day. The customer returned in a week and said: "I'll take the land you spoke of last week at the price named." "I sold it," said the broker, "six days ago." His customer was irate. "Why didn't you let me know? That wasn't fair dealing!" "But I did; I told you a week ago that the lot would be sold the next day." "Oh, but of course nobody believes a statement of that kind. I supposed you meant a month hence, at the shortest."

With every lie we begin to destroy the significance of language on which all human intercourse depends. Those who ask why truth-speaking is right only ask because they believe they will receive a truthful answer. Without respect for truth any question is vain. As soon as we have much reason to doubt the veracity of any answer, all earnest talk is silenced. A lady who feared she had heart trouble asked her doctor whether

it was so. He answered truly that she had no such trouble, but she did not believe him. She knew his kindly habit of lying, and his renewed assurances only made her doubt the more. There was nothing he could say, for he had killed her trust. A lie is not so different from a murder; indeed, the life of human trust that it kills is more precious than physical existence.

III

In view of what has been said of the strength of truth and of the self-contradiction and destructiveness of lying, let us first give a definition of truth in order to clear the ground of those *misstatements* which are not lies at all. Truthfulness is the conscientious effort to convey an accurate impression. The points of importance in this definition are:

1. That truthfulness is not equivalent to accuracy, but does *aim* at accuracy.

2. That truthfulness is always the attempt to give the right impression, not to state what is literally correct, though misleading.

A little girl came sobbing into my room a short time ago: "Oh dear, I said there were some stamps in the case, and when I went to get them there weren't any, so I have told a lie!" This over-scrupulous little person was greatly consoled by being told that you cannot tell a lie without knowing it.

Again, a well-recognised form or convention which no longer deceives is not a lie. We write "My dear Mr. Smith" to the stranger without any untruthful-

ness, for the words are worn so thin by misusage that they no longer arouse any of the natural implications of affection, though the word "dear" in the *middle* of a note is still significant. For a similar reason the "regret" in answer to a formal invitation is no lie, however little sorrow you feel. You do not expect the recipient to be touched for an instant by your sorrow, even if you have said that you "regret exceedingly."

Closely associated with such empty forms, there are phrases which have not become meaningless and in using which we are able to lie. I tell my maid to say that I am "not at home," and comfortably ensconce myself before my fire. I justify the phrase by saying that it deceives no one. This is true in some places, for example in London, but if I feel a bit embarrassed at being seen at the window by a guest who has just been told that I am not at home I may suspect myself of the wish to deceive. Why not say that I am engaged? Because people would insist on coming in. In that case my "not at home" does intentionally deceive; truth is always to be tested by intention.

This same criterion is valid in the case of games. When you play "Twenty Questions" your answers are meant to mislead as far as is consistent with *literal* accuracy; but this is not lying, because it is fully expected by your opponent, who knows that it is one of the rules of the game. A joke, or a secret which is soon to be revealed, is accepted by society as so much a part of the social game that it has passed out of the realm of truth and lying, though there are always

border-line cases in which misstatements become destructive of confidence. On April 1st a whole flood of deceptions spring gaily forth, but they cause no bitterness, no distrust *beyond that day*, for they, too, are part of an accepted game. But imagine a perpetual April Fools' Day! Life would not be worth living. Under the same heading come the recognised deceptions of the larger game of war. Here, as in tennis or football, there are definite agreements regarding the deceits which are to be permitted as long as the war or the game lasts, and because understood they are not untruthful.

It is of more importance to insist that, because truthfulness is the attempt to convey an accurate impression, it requires sensitiveness to the point of view of the hearer. A brutal statement is never a true statement. If a timid patient, who has a slight lung trouble, asks a doctor whether she has consumption, and he hastily replies, "Yes," his answer, though literally accurate, is essentially untrue. To her the prediction implied is of misery and death, while he may know that the trouble is perfectly curable. The thoroughly truthful person is not he who states the bare facts, but he who tries to give the true impression to his hearer.

One more point of importance in distinguishing truth from falsehood needs to be made clear. To be truthful does not require us to blurt out any momentary feeling just because it is there. When I come down in the morning, feeling annoyed because the buttons came off my suit as I was hurrying to be punctual, I do not need to express the irritation which I feel toward

society in general and my innocent family in particular. My momentary impulse may make me abhor the sight of the friendly guest who has come to pay me a call. Truthfulness does not require me to tell her so, nor indeed am I truthful, (because I am not myself), until I have tried to recover and bring into the foreground, where it belongs, my belief in hospitality.

I think it should now be clear (*a*) that in any convention, joke, fairy-story, or game, we are truthful as long as we follow the rules of the game, and (*b*) that a truthful statement is always one which tries to be tactful and thorough, not bare and partial.

IV

Armed by these explanations, we are ready to advance a step in the direction of learning to check falsehood by making a diagnosis of the causes of lying which differ so markedly that they can be cured only by very different treatment. On the border-line between mistakes and lies are the cases, so common in children, of *careless or imaginative misstatements.* "Oh, Mamma, I saw three big foxes with bushy tails in the woods as I came home!" There is half-conscious inaccuracy in the statement, yet the child is so excited, both by his own visions and by his desire to arouse interest, that it is not strictly a lie. His imagination has slipped over the border-line that divided reality from invention. As we grow older the boundary grows more definite, and the lies due to imagination decrease, though in artistic temperaments the desire to make a

statement harmonious may blur and alter the crude outlines of fact.

Such lies in children can be cured, not by severe rebuke, but by accepting the foxes and fairies as belonging to the land of the imagination and trying to make the children keep the distinction clear between such dramatic fancies and loyalty to their word.

Like the lies of imagination, the *lies of thoughtlessness* come very near the border-line that separates inaccuracy from untruthfulness. The myriad careless, unweighed, exaggerated statements which flutter about the air, lighting here and there, are hardly to be characterised as lies, though they do almost as much harm in weakening the significance of speech. "He is a perfect brute," we calmly say, having once seen him flog a horse. "She is not worth knowing," we enunciate after two days' acquaintance. Such carelessness when once recognised in ourselves becomes untruthful.

How can we overcome the habit of making such slap-dash statements? Only when we see the consequences. We find that because we usually exaggerate, our word is more and more distrusted, that because we have used superlatives indiscriminately we have no convincing language to express genuine condemnation or appreciation, and above all, that our flippant judgment has hurt the reputation of someone whom a more careful estimate would have helped. When we have felt how our carelessness blasts our power of expression, we must patiently begin again, often stiffly at first, as in any other new effort, to rebuild in ourselves the power of delicate and accurate statement.

To speak the truth is much harder than to exaggerate, as accurate colouring is harder than chromo. In truth, however, is the only lasting satisfaction.

*Lies of shyness or embarrassment* are often so nearly uncontrollable as to be on the border-line of responsibility. I have known a timid girl to make baldly inaccurate statements at her first party. She said she had seen a Velasquez in the Madrid gallery, when she had never been in Spain, and expressed a liking for olives, which she detested. The words fell from her mouth and she knew they were false, yet she was too timid to face the ignominy of recalling them. This is an extreme case of the innumerable lies caused by fear. "Timidity," says a vigorous woman, "makes people untruthful, and I am going to beat it out of my children!"

Under the heading of the *lies of cowardice* comes the swarm of lies that are told to cover a misdeed, conceal a blunder, or make a pleasing impression. It takes many years for a sensitive person to get over the notion, due often to the standards of parents and nurses, that to break a valuable vase is far worse than to tell a lie, and even among high-minded people a skilful lie is often more condoned than the awkward crudity of an unpleasant truth.

Lies due to fear are best overcome, like any other type of fear, by facing what it is that one truly dreads and by steady practice. When once we have thoroughly learned to dread cowardice more than disgrace, the temptation to lie in order to cover up an awkward slip or fault will cease. The more we lean on the truth

alone the more we shall feel its strong protection around us, while the crumbling walls of falsehood under which we used to hide will reveal their treacherous weakness. It is enlightening to see how much more successful and popular are the fearlessly truthful people who come out boldly with a confession of their ignorance or awkwardness. People lie to prevent anyone from opening the door of the closet which holds the proverbial skeleton. If once we bring the skeleton out where it is plainly visible it soon ceases to be an object either of terror or of curiosity. It matters very little that you cannot speak French with a Parisian accent, that you wait on table in a summer hotel to earn your tuition, or that you are not engaged for all the winter's dances, but as long as you try to conceal any of these facts they become pitfalls for lying. Once openly admitted, the dread of discovery is gone and with it vanish the lies of concealment.

Probably more lies are due to fear than to any other cause, but with a very different kind of temperament lying may be the result not of self-distrust, but of *self-assertion and ambition*. Lying and corruption honeycomb the business and politics of our great cities and threaten the stability of democratic government. When the roots of this form of lie are traced they seem to lead back to selfishness, and, like all selfishness, can only be eradicated by the widening of interest.

For those of us who are not in public life or business the tangle of temptations to lie is apt to trip us up in *social relations*. The dishonest politician turns his attention away from the wrong done to the city and

looks only to the immediate and apparent advantage to himself and his heelers. It may not be a very different motive which leads a charitable society to assure Mrs. Midas that she will make an excellent president of the School for Crippled Children when it is Mrs. Midas's money that alone secures her candidacy. As lies of fear are outgrown when we come to dread cowardice more than discovery, so lies due to selfishness will drop away as we identify ourselves with a cause that is greater than our former meagre ambition.

When I am concerned to have the president of the Home for Crippled Children a person who will make that institution do its best work I shall resist the temptation to deceive Mrs. Midas into accepting the position. It will mean less to me to be invited to hear Richard Strauss play at her musicals than to have the Home for Crippled Children the best of its kind. *[Any strong interest builds up truth within the boundaries of that interest.]* The corrupt politician will not be dishonest toward his heelers or his children. He realises that his life is bound up with theirs. The rough boys gathered together in a working boys' club will at first steal from the club, then, as their loyalty increases, they will steal *for* it, until a wider sympathy leads them to be honest toward all the community of which they feel themselves a part.[1] The patriot cannot be dishonest in public affairs, for he is identified with his nation.

In almost all of these cases—even in the case of the

[1] See article on "Street Gangs," "The Outlook," August 22, 1903.

corrupt politician—the motive of self-seeking in deception is blended with the *motive of kindliness*. The impulse to give pleasure, and even more to avoid giving pain, is strong in human nature, and it is a mistaken soft-heartedness that is the cause of a large percentage of lies. When a girl who is poor and cannot afford a new dress asks me anxiously whether her shabby, old-fashioned gown looks well, how can I tell her that it is dowdy? So I slip into saying that it is very pretty, and in ninety cases out of a hundred feel no compunction because the immediate effect is so soothing.

The immediate effect! Yes, but in every one of these cases we must look further to get at the real results. Lies of carelessness, of exaggeration, of fear, of self-seeking, and of kindliness, seem at first as harmless as the immediate effect of the powder blown into a boy's hand from a toy pistol. It takes time for the deadly results to show. It is not an exaggeration to compare the effects of lying with those of blood-poisoning, for lying poisons and destroys all confidence.

Lies of kindliness, like those of courtesy, can best be overcome by identifying ourselves not with an immediate, but with a permanent, kindness, and the special difficulties can, as in the former case, be overcome by forethought. When the poor girl asked me anxiously whether I liked her hideous dress, it was a shallow kindliness that made me say yes. I may have made her temporarily happier, but anyone who is eager to know the truth on such a point will also be sensitive to observe either the lack of conviction in my voice or the fact that whenever she asks me such a question I in-

variably reassure her. It will not take long to make her doubt my word, and then all her content will turn to an uneasiness which no reassurances of mine can overcome, for I have destroyed her confidence. How much better to tell her at the outset that I think her dress would be greatly improved by removing the big red bow of cheap ribbon that does not harmonise with the blue skirt, or that I think she has done remarkably well to make the dress over, but that as it is not in the latest style people will notice it less if she puts on no brilliant colours. Her feelings may, of course, be hurt, but I shall have increased her confidence in my real desire to help and I shall have shown her that I honour her too much to lie to her. For is it not the worst insult to people to treat them as weaklings, unable to digest the truth they ask for?

I have tried to show that when any question arises whether or not to speak the truth, there is always a short and partial or a long and thorough view. The short view says: "Just this once a lie will not matter. The truth will give sharp pain, the lie will make everything smooth." True, if you only look at the moment or the immediate relief of an awkward situation. The long view, the thorough view, looks beyond. It sees that this temporary peace is far outweighed by a lasting distrust, while even this instant's success is forever haunted by the final, inevitable disaster which lying brings. The short view excuses the lie because of its infrequency. The long view sees that each lie takes one stone out of the bridge over which all must pass. The loss of one stone does not perceptibly weaken the

structure, but let each of us take out one stone and the bridge will totter. The short view exults in the apparent success of its strategy; the long view sees that no such strategy can ultimately succeed, for the lie is but an artificial attempt to prop up an inverted pyramid which becomes more top heavy with every lie, while truth, like a pyramid broadly based on reality, cannot be overturned.

## CHAPTER XX

## TRUTH-SPEAKING AS A FINE ART

I

Since truthfulness is the effort to give an accurate impression, it is evident that speaking the truth is no easy matter. To be truthful one must not only say what one thinks, but think what one says, and to whom one is speaking. It is not only expression, but impression, that must be borne in mind, and to give the right impression one must carry about with one the search-light of sympathy to light up the dark places toward which one is sailing.

"Do you like my sketch of Santa Barbara?" asks a sensitive artist. Well, in fact you do not, but merely to say "no" is often to give him the false impression that you think *all* his work a failure. Therefore, to be thoroughly truthful you must not only say what you mean, but try your best to make him see what you mean. If you put yourself in his place, your utterance of the fragmentary though literal truth will be checked, and you will so phrase your criticism that while he will realise the lacks which you feel in this canvas, he will also be kept mindful of the warm approval which you feel for the genuineness and sincerity expressed in this faulty sketch as well as in all his work, and the pleasure that you take in other paintings of his.

St. Paul told his friends to speak the truth in love, because he knew that the truth cannot be spoken *without* love, and that when there is loving kindness, the hardest truth-telling is softened and moulded till it can be gladly received. The great open secret of the art of telling a truth that may give pain is to keep throughout a loving and appreciative attitude. Then the truth as it strikes home does not crush, nor rebound in an angry retort, but clears the ground.

I have been a great deal troubled to watch the extravagance of my friends, the Grays, who give expensive dinners and buy most fashionable clothes, when I know that they have not paid their rent. At first I go to their dinners and only inwardly protest at their luxury. One day, when I have been telling an acquaintance about the extravagance of the Grays, I suddenly realise how disloyal, how untrue a friend I am. Is it not an insult to my friends to think that they would be more hurt by my effort to understand and help them than by my distrustful silence in their presence and condemnation in their absence? "True, but it is perfectly useless to give any advice; people always resent it," I argue. Naturally they resent most "advice," for is not most advice given both at the wrong time and in the wrong way? We accumulate unspoken criticism and resentment for weeks, as various instances of our friends' faults occur, and then at an inopportune moment our dammed-up protests break loose and swamp all around them. Then there comes recrimination and bitter misunderstanding, whence I draw the conclusion that it is of no use to speak the truth to your friends, because

they do not want to hear it, and never act on it. It were as valid to argue that because banging on the piano is not melodious there is no such thing as music. While I am grumbling over the Grays' extravagance, a better friend has quietly and lovingly talked the whole thing over with them, has made them feel her sympathy with their struggle to make the most out of a meagre income, has shown them the wrong they are doing, and has suggested ways of economy which will free instead of cramping them. She succeeds, because throughout she feels and makes felt her abiding love.

II

But love is not all that we need in truth-speaking. We need skill, just as a doctor needs not only love of his work, but training and skill in dealing with his cases. Truth-speaking should be prepared for and practised like any other fine art. If at a dancing party no one knew how to steer, the most loving intentions could not save the couples from many awkward bumps and bruises. In truth-speaking, the awkward encounters and the bruised feelings are even more evident; but though the same bumps occur again and again, it is rare that any preparation is made to acquire skill in avoiding them.

I have a kindly neighbour who habitually sits at her parlour window, and whenever I pass her house she urges me to drop in. Her incessant gossip wearies me, and I one day turn down a back street to avoid passing her house. Alas! she is walking on that very street.

She pinions me on the sidewalk and says: "Do come in and take tea with me." Caught thus unawares, I say that I have an engagement, that I am very busy today, but that otherwise I would come with great pleasure. I have bumped up against an awkward situation, and to get out of it I lie, ignominiously and probably without success. Yet this is no new type of the difficulty of truth-telling. I have had similar experiences a hundred times, and so has everyone I know. Why should we not be as carefully prepared to deal with such a common emergency as to treat burns or sprains? Is not the art of conveying a true impression as worthy of study and forethought as clay-modeling or dancing?

It is true that when we resolutely turn our backs on lying, and resolve to speak only the truth at whatever cost, we shall not find our task easy, but we shall find it well worth the effort. In any difficult case we need not only sympathy, imagination and loving-kindness, but tact, accuracy, self-control, humility, patience, resolute courage, and, whenever it is possible, forethought.

I have given a number of ordinary cases of courtesy and kindliness in which there is a temptation to lie. Let us see how they, and others of a more searching character, can be met truthfully and yet without brutality.

The artist shows you his sketch of Santa Barbara and you do not like it. What can you truthfully say? Perhaps your instinct will be to say nothing at all, and in some cases this is the best solution, but a sensitive person may feel the condemnation of silence more try-

ing, because of its myriad possibilities, than any definite word. If you know nothing of art, you can truly say that you do not feel competent to judge the picture. You can point out any bit of line or colour that does appeal to you, and if you are genuinely interested in the artist, ask to see other pictures of his that you may like better, or to see the same picture again. If you are an artist, your suggestions will be really valued, and detailed criticism which can be turned to account is of far more significance to the artist than indiscriminate praise. It is usually the vagueness or the wholesale quality of a condemnation that makes it hard to receive. If criticism is given in such a definite way and is so linked to commendation that the means of improvement are suggested, any earnest worker will, when he has thought it over, be glad to have had it. Anyone who is doing serious work receives the keenest criticism through the success or failure of that work. He knows this, and he is hungry for any intelligent suggestions that will forestall future failure. Flattery is a stone when he wants bread, and even the most shining and polished gem of politeness fails to feed the hungry.

Are we not often wrong in assuming that the request for truth is the request for flattery? My hostess asks me whether I enjoyed her party and thought it successful. "Oh, yes; I had a splendid time. It was a great success," I answer enthusiastically, although I have just told a friend that it was the stupidest party of the season. Of course I cannot tell the hostess that. It would hurt her dreadfully; she feels so happy about

the party. All is smoothed and made successful by a courteous lie.

This is the short view. Let us take a more extensive one. Sometimes people ask questions not for an accurate answer, but simply to get a compliment or an encouraging word; then one can take the question no more seriously than it is meant, and turn it aside. But there are also times when a hostess really wants to know whether her party was a success, because if not, she wants to do better next time. This valuable information it may be almost impossible for her to get. How meaningless and tiresome are all the reiterations of "splendid time!" How exasperating to have nothing but assurances of a perfection which you have every reason to doubt. The discovery that the party was a failure will hurt for the time, but if she is told considerately it will keep her from the far greater disaster of trying to give similar parties and finding the acceptances gradually dwindle.

A good deal harder are the cases where warm loving-kindness is expressed in unwelcome ways. A devoted old nurse brings me for a Christmas present a brilliant yellow tidy patiently and lovingly embroidered with impossible pink roses. If she asks me whether I like it, must I tell her that I do not? The short view is to praise it with eloquence, install it on my sofa as long as she is there, and hastily shove it out of sight as soon as she goes. The process must be yearly repeated, for assured that she has delighted me, she will give me a similar token again, and if she comes in unexpectedly she will notice the absence of the tidy

and perhaps suspect the reason. Can I tell her that I do not think it beautiful? Yes, if she wants to know, it is, I believe, the only course worthy of the tender loyalty of her devotion to me. It is degrading, unfaithful, to let the petty evasions involved by my lie sully the brave and beautiful tie between us. It is more than probable that when I gently tell her that I think other colours would be prettier, and that perhaps next year she will make me a pin-cushion just like the white one on my bureau which is very worn, she will be relieved rather than hurt. We think that our lies have tightly bottled up the unwelcome truth. It almost invariably leaks out.

Another case shows more directly the harm done by kindly deception. A young girl asks a distinguished critic for his opinion of her poetry and hands him her little collection of crude, ardent aspirations for his comment. He thinks them impossible, but he cannot bear to hurt her feelings, and so tells her that they have some exquisite lines and are full of promise. She is delighted and encouraged, while he feels happy that he has given her keen pleasure. He does not look down the vista of the years and see how he has turned the current of her life in a wrong direction. Readiness to give pain, and to see others bear the pain we have given, is a duty which should not be confined to surgeons.

Many people, who would not defend lying at any other time, believe that people should sometimes be deceived in cases of critical illness. "He might die if he were told," is the usual argument, and "For the

sake of saving life it is surely right to tell one lie." Here is an only child who has pneumonia. His mother who is nursing him would be overcome at the thought that the disease is pneumonia, for her little girl died of it two years before, and if broken down by the knowledge she would be wholly unfit to nurse the child. "It is not pneumonia, is it, doctor?" she asks imploringly. Cannot he tell her that it is only bronchitis? Then her full strength will be let free to care for the child, who is sensitive to every shade of his mother's mood. If we are thinking only of the moment and of this single case, we might answer yes, but not if we remember that all lies begin to poison human intercourse. Suppose the doctor lies and the child recovers. Later the mother learns that it was pneumonia that her child had, and in learning this she learns also that the kind doctor will lie whenever he thinks it advisable. Will she trust his word when the child is ill again? If he assured her that this time it is not pneumonia, will she believe him even if he speaks the truth? How indeed can he then drive home his truth? The lie destroys the meaning of language and the confidence between human beings.

Even with the insane this is pathetically true. A well-known alienist testifies that one of the hardest tasks he has with his insane patients is to restore the confidence destroyed by the well-meant lies of their friends.

These difficult cases can only be well met by one who, in addition to a penetrating sympathy, has also prepared himself, as any artist prepares for a

delicate task. The doctor who is to give a true impression to the anxious mother or the sick patient must have the daring wisdom born of faith in human nature. He will believe that the soul of man has in it the power to rise to an emergency; that it is only when we ask the utmost that we set free the largest power. He will tell the inquirer, tenderly and firmly, that there is to be a hard battle, but that the hardest fights have been won where doctor, nurse and patient coöperated, and that courage is one dominant element in the chance of recovery. And if he fails after doing his best there is success even in the failure. It may be true, though it can never be proved, that lying has saved life. It is certain that lying has destroyed trust, which is more valuable than life. We send our sons to war to save the Union; are we not ready possibly to shorten a few lives for the saving of truth?

III

Another critical case is apt to come up in any discussion of truth-speaking: the right to lie to keep a promise. My friend confides in me a very important secret and some inquisitive outsider asks me whether or not it is true. It is none of his business and I am in honour bound to guard my friend's treasure. This is the situation as commonly given. To tell what I have agreed to keep secret is, it is urged, to lie to my friend, to whom I owe a stronger loyalty than to this impertinent acquaintance. The question as thus put is a choice of loyalties. But why is any lie necessary? Why not refuse definitely and at once to answer the

question? Because, it is said, this immediately betrays the secret and thereby you break your word to your friend. This is not true in the hands of a skilful truth-speaker. It is perfectly possible to refuse an answer in such a way that the inquirer is as much at sea as he was before he asked the question. The questioner who asks questions which he has no right to ask, can justly be treated as a spy. I can turn on him and say: "Let me first ask you a question: Would you open my desk and read my private letters? Is there any difference between that and the attempt to pry into my private affairs by questions which you know I ought not to answer? Whether this report is true or not, I should equally refuse to tell you, and if you choose to say that you know that it is true, your lie may be of serious injury."

It will be said that in such a case the secret-hunter will announce the news as certain, but I think not, especially if we make a practice of refusing to betray any secrets.

But even if our friend's secret would be betrayed by our refusal to answer, that is no justification for lying in order to protect it. In earlier times your friend would have expected you to kill or steal for his sake. Is it not a relic of barbarism that holds that we are bound by honour to lie for our friend? Do we not rather dishonour him by the lie? We do not find it necessary to specify in making a promise that we will keep it, unless it can only be kept by murder. It still seems necessary in some cases to specify that we will keep it unless at the cost of truth.

When we are dealing with friends the power to give the right impression is greater in proportion to the understanding which intimacy brings. You can question or criticise your friend's extravagance on the basis of a friendship that cares, just as he cares himself, for his enduring good. If he is a loyal friend and if you approach him in the spirit of that loyalty, you can raise your friendship to a clearer, warmer height than ever before. For the friend who will help the best in you is the one with whom you can be most sincere and unafraid, because his very appeal to your better self expresses his confidence in you and gives you hope of his support in your further aspirations.

I do not mean that we ought to interfere in every half-understood problem of every friend's life, nor that we ought ever to try to impose our standard on one who sees the truth from a different angle, nor that after we have done our best to make him see our point of view and he does not, we should condemn his conduct. I do mean that a lie to a friend is an insult, because the office of friendship is to give to and receive from your friend the very best, at whatever cost of humiliation or pain.

You can go to your extravagant friend and say to him: "I have felt for a long time that we are too good friends to go on misunderstanding one another on any subject. Don't you think so?" Ten to one your friend agrees and you add: "This is a hard subject to talk about and I have put it off several times, but I am sure you would rather have me talk it out with you

even if it does seem like criticism of you." Your friend agrees again and very probably when your criticism of his extravagance is made he is rather relieved than hurt and is glad of the opportunity fully to clear up his own mind on the subject. For it often happens that we do not see the wrong we are doing because we have not thought out its implications; in that case a friendly criticism quickens our advance by showing us what lies a little further along the line of our own thinking.

On the other hand what he is doing may be right from his point of view, though wrong from yours, and in that case you must be able to make your point of view clear to him. It may be a long and gradual process, starting far away from the particular question, but unless he gets your point of view, the wrong deed will never be wrong to him. Even if he gets your point of view, his inference about the special deed may be different from yours or you may yourself become the convert. But in any case your friendship has become more real. Your pilotage that helped him to quicker discoveries, assured him of your faith and comprehension; or your point of view, which he does not accept, helps him to know you better and perhaps to be surer of himself; or your revelation to him and his to you has brought you farther on the road of comprehension so that you can never be again where you were before. It has been a furrowing and a fertilising, a defining and a deepening of your relation, and though the ploughing up of the smooth soil was hard and painful, the harvest is a rich reward.

IV

It is decidedly easier to prepare by forethought to give a right impression in the often recurring problems of ordinary social courtesy than to tell a hard truth to a friend. When my gossiping neighbor pins me on the street and asks me in to tea, I shall in most cases either weakly yield or get out of it by lying, unless I have thought the situation over beforehand. Why is it that I do not want to see her? On reflection it seems to be both because she bores me and because there are other things I would rather do. How can I tell her that she bores me unspeakably? I do not need to do so. To speak the truth does not mean to say all that is in my mind. But it is more important to realise that the reason I am bored by this kindly lady is that I have dwelt on her weak points without ever taking the trouble to realise her strong qualities.

No one can give a true impression in a frigid state of mind. The first step in speaking a difficult truth is to warm up our realisation of the situation till we see it as it is. My neighbour is endlessly kind and devoted, her life is a bit lonely with no one at home but a paralysed brother to whom she brings all she can of cheer and interest. When I remember this, I suddenly find that I should like to have some part in making his life and hers a little brighter. If I still decide to refuse to go there to tea, it will be in so different a spirit that speaking the truth about it will be comparatively easy. Now I can tell her truly how

glad I should be to do anything for her brother and I can give her the genuine reasons for my refusal,—the other ties to which I am pledged,—it may be the essay I should write or my family claims. Suppose I have no claims? In that case it does not much matter how I spend my time, for anyone who is not steered by a purpose is sure to drift, and my neighbour's urgency may be useful by making me face what it is that I really want to do and therefore what I want to cut off.

In all these cases I have tried to illustrate the same principles. Really to speak the truth at all times, that is to give the truest impression we can, we must feel the situation with vivid sympathy. It is largely because we are cold and unimaginative that we think it necessary to blunder into lying. Again a surprising number of hard truths can be received and even welcomed when they have been carefully thought out instead of blurted out. There will still inevitably be cases in which our truthfulness will give to others and to ourselves pain which a skilful lie would avoid, at least for the time. But pain is not the worst evil in the world. We can all recall in looking back on them, many experiences of pain which we are glad to have had because they brought insight and sympathy or goaded us on to the right path. The willingness both to give and receive pain is one which many of us lack, brought up as we are in hot-house conditions and protected from piercing criticism. The lack makes us oversensitive and ineffective.

Truth-speaking is not a recipe for making life easy,

but for making it worth while, and no one who has thoroughly tested the results of frank, accurate, reliable speech and action will want to go back into the vitiated air of lying. It is evident, however, that truth-telling can surely be based only on right living. If we are sympathetic, generous, courageous, just, it will be possible to be open and true. In so far as we are bitter, avaricious, cowardly, self-deceitful, we shall find it hard to be wholly sincere with others. We cannot isolate truthfulness. To demand truth of ourselves is therefore to demand uprightness; thus truth becomes the guardian of our character.

## CHAPTER XXI

## OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND PREJUDICE

I

Two men are reading in the evening paper an account of the Democratic Convention. "Outrageous proceedings!" one man says. "The behaviour of the Democratic leaders is a disgrace to the country. The party hasn't a leg to stand on."

"On the contrary," says the second, "only the Democrats are idealists, the Republicans are nothing but wind-bags and money-kings. There is not a man among them who has any independence."

It does not take much intelligence to decide on the politics of the speakers, yet neither fully realises that he is prejudiced. He does not see that the heat of the campaign has generated great clouds of black smoke which obscure all the evidence of good in the opposing party. He cannot read the paper as it is. It is expurgated and coloured for him by preconceptions. So strongly rooted is his prejudice that he is sure that if it were roughly pulled up it would drag with it much of the ground-work of his life. His prejudices are all tangled with his loyalties and he does not realise that the two can be separated. Unconsciously to himself his judgment is tainted by the deep-dyed impression that you can't be a loyal Republican unless

you find nothing but evil in the Democrats, just as a Harvard man is likely to glorify Harvard by running down Yale, or a country-lover to dwell on the noise and squalor of the city, ignoring its opportunties for education and art. Prejudice is judging before you have sufficient evidence; it is the snapping down of a valve against attention to disturbing facts.

When anyone is prejudiced against a person he has seen a fragmentary aspect which he dislikes and lets that small bit shut out any further effort to understand the whole man. "He must be horrid, for he has such protruding ears," is a process of arguing that in subtler forms of expression is very common. "I can't bear that Mr. Black," a girl said to me lately. "Do you know him well?" "No, I have never met him and I never want to. He built his house in such a way as entirely to shut off our view."

If we could trace many prejudices back to their source we should find that they are due to a mistaken idea of what loyalty is. A lecturer on geology at the University of California happened to remark that certain mountains in Alaska were higher than any in California. One of his pupils came up to him confidentially after the lecture and said: "Excuse me, sir, but something in your remarks this morning hurt my feelings. We Californians do not wish to hear that there are any mountains higher than ours." So the devoted Bostonian has been parodied as saying of Heaven: "It is a good place, but it is not Boston." It is loyalty to his beloved country or city which moves the Californian or the Bostonian, yet

we are apt to hear strangers say: "Boston would be a very pleasant place if the people were not so sure that it is the only place in the world." Our mistaken loyalty which refuses to see and amend faults soon weakens the city, the political party, or the petted child we refuse to think other than perfect.

A New York business man, who had had a large experience in making machinery, recently visited both England and Germany in order to study their methods. He came back convinced that Germany would soon excel England in the production of the best machinery. "If you go to a German machinist and make a suggestion toward the improvement of his works, he listens hard and asks for further criticism. Make a similar suggestion to an Englishman and he takes it as an insult. It is inevitable that the Germans will gain faster than the English."

The weak point of prejudice is that it does not do what it undertakes. It does not defend nor protect its idol. Its loyalty is superficial. We are never thoroughly loyal to anything which we consider as "not-to-be-improved." True loyalty is keenly aware of the weakness as well as the strength of what it loves, and is eager to see the good in other things because it wants to make what it loves still better.

II

Loyalty necessitates open-mindedness. It is equally true, however, that there is no genuine open-mindedness without a basis of loyalty. People of ingrained

prejudices are inclined to back themselves up by saying that open-minded people have no strength of character. This is true not of people who have no prejudices, but of people who have no *convictions,* no chosen loyalties. Such people may call themselves open-minded, but really their view of reality is so blurred and confused by a variety of vague impressions that all is misty. To see anything clearly one must have a point of view, and this is found only by loyalty to some interest. We may be unprejudiced in our views about Central Africa or the nature of the infinite, but it is not until we take a strong interest in geography or mathematics that we are really open-minded about these subjects.

The open mind is like an open crucible in contrast with a sealed vessel. New experiences can be poured into it without breaking it; but it must not leak. It must have a solid bottom of conviction, else no accumulation is possible in it. Facts dribble through and are pushed out by further facts.

If we kept clear the distinction between the open mind and the sieve-like mind, we should not hold so desperately to our special prejudice. A prejudice often seems to its holder like a life-preserver which is all that keeps his head above water. How can he be open to your view of religion or of the Yale football team without dropping his hold on his own religion, or the strength of the Harvard team and so sinking unsupported? It takes time and experience to realise that truth is always bouyant and will lift one above the waves.

Prejudiced people are apt to monopolise the adjec-

tive "strong." They forget that a rigid iron bar is ceaselessly exposed to rust and may suddenly snap, while the growing and flexible willow shoot constantly changes, but as constantly absorbs the sun and air into itself. The swarm of critics who resisted Darwin's patient efforts to reach the truth about the evolution of species made a "strong" majority against him and the few friends who understood his work, and doubtless the critics felt as strong as steel. They did not realise that Darwin was *irresistible* because he rested always and wholly on the truth. He might be proved mistaken. Good! He rejoiced to know it, because it gave him an opportunity to correct his mistakes and enlarge his view.

Huxley writes of Darwin:[1] "To the present generation the name of Charles Darwin stands alongside those of Isaac Newton and Michael Faraday, and like them calls up the grand ideal of a searcher after truth and interpreter of nature. They think of him who bore it as a rare combination of genius, industry, and unswerving veracity, who earned his place among the famous men of the age by sheer native power in the teeth of a gale of popular prejudice and uncheered by a sign of favour or appreciation from the official fountains of honour, as one who in spite of an acute sensitiveness to praise and blame, and notwithstanding provocations which might have excused any outbreak, kept himself clear of all envy, hatred, and malice, nor dealt otherwise than fairly and justly with the

[1] "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," by Francis Darwin, vol. i., p. 533.

unfairness and injustice which was showered upon him, while to the end of his days he was ready to listen with patience and respect to the most insignificant of reasonable objections."

To this splendid testimony of his great friend, Darwin's own wise and modest entry in his autobiography adds its significant note:[2]

"I had during many years followed a golden rule, namely, that whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once, for I found by experience that such facts and thoughts are more apt to escape from the memory. Owing to this habit, very few objections were raised against my views which I had not at least noticed and attempted to answer."

It was this open-mindedness born of an intense and enduring loyalty to his work that made Darwin invulnerable. To be prejudiced is to starve and thwart your own interests by refusing to take in new experience. The open-minded man makes even his adversaries contribute to his advance by showing him where he can do better. It is then the open-minded, not the prejudiced, who have enduring strength.

III

The examples I have already used illustrate the harm of prejudice. The wages of the sin of prejudice, as of all sin, is death, because the wilful closing of atten-

[2] "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," by Francis Darwin, vol. i., p. 71.

tion against what we ought to hear shuts off our own life from us and makes us stunted and withered. We shall see this more clearly by watching the effects of special types of prejudice.

*Religious prejudices* are much less strong than formerly; but are we most of us at once loyal to our own convictions, and yet perfectly fair and ready to receive light from creeds which we do not hold? Long ago the Caliph Omar burnt the Alexandrian Library and thereby deprived mankind of some of the greatest treasures of literature. He said in justification of his act: "Any book which contains what is not in the Koran is dangerous, and any book which contains what is in the Koran is useless." Such an act would be impossible now, but the spirit which brought about the act is not wholly quenched. Many Protestants are not as ready as they should be to learn from the wisdom and beauty of the Catholic Church, nor Catholics to believe that any Protestant can have the true welfare of Catholic children at heart. Few of us are open-minded enough to appreciate all that the Jews have contributed to religion and still fewer are quite fair to the beliefs of the Chinese.

I have already touched on *political prejudices* in their relation to a mistaken party loyalty. It is because we recognise the value of parties and believe our party to be the best, that we should turn our intelligence to see and to win for our side all the good that is to be found in the opposite party. No party which is self-satisfied and sees no virtue in its opponent, has enduring strength. This is as true of the reformers

as of the spoilsmen, and it is a sign of quickening power when Jerome or Folk can see the kindliness and force of many corrupt politicians, and yet see also the need of crushing their infamous system of bribery and blackmail.

Favouritism, or hasty judgment in favour of anything which we have not fairly tested, is as much prejudice as an unreasoned dislike. Patent medicines would cease to waste our money so pitifully did not the prejudice in favour of any new drug that is alluringly advertised constantly crop up in spite of perpetual proof of the inefficacy of such remedies in the long run. I know a poor seamstress who has saturated herself for years with every remedy that she saw advertised as a cure for headache and indigestion. Result: increased indigestion and a fearful array of empty bottles at the original cost of one dollar apiece.

*Social prejudice,* whether against a race, a city, a family, or an individual, brings worse results than loss of money. It is far from uncommon to find in people a prejudice against all foreigners. An Englishman discussing the Cuban War told his American friend that the United States was wholly wrong to interfere in Cuba: "They are nothing but niggers," he said, and "I would as readily shoot a nigger as a bear. The Boers are all niggers, too. In fact all nations are niggers except the Anglo-Saxons." By these sweeping condemnations the Englishman shut off from his sympathy a vast number of the most interesting people in the world and shrank into the limits of the narrow shell he had made for himself.

There are not very many people who are open-minded toward the strong qualities of every race. Many of our soldiers despise the Filipinos because they are short (as if size were any criterion of character), and thereby greatly intensify the difficulty of establishing the fair and friendly relations with the natives which our government needs. Few people not brought up among them are wholly free from prejudice against a dark skin, though the "pale-faced" Europeans have a far less rich glow of colour than the bronzed Indians.

To be unprejudiced is not to force oneself to admire all the traits of any people. We may be quite open-minded and still dislike the Jewish nose, the African lips, or the Chinese eye-slits. We are prejudiced if because of these features we fail to appreciate the keen intelligence of the Jew, the bounteous sunniness of the negro, and the strict honesty of the Chinese merchant. To be unprejudiced is to see things in light and shade and not to let the shadow of a single trait darken the whole of character.

People who dislike all Japanese or all negroes are apt to harbour also a prejudice against what they consider unpardonable traits in an individual of their own race. "He has such an affected manner, he must be a chump." "I don't want to know her. She dresses like the old scratch." Perhaps the manner or the dress is not admirable, but we need not therefore allow the offensive manner or dress to envelop the whole person in its unattractiveness. You might as well reject the chestnut because of its prickly burr. When you have

penetrated the shell of manner, of which the owner is often quite unconscious, you may find a rich kernel of good sense and humour, and the worn old-fashioned dress may come even to look beautiful when you see it as symbolic of the generosity of a girl who is rigidly economising in order to send her sister to Europe.

An untidy looking woman with two dirty-faced children clambers laboriously into the electric car and sits down next to you. Your instinct is to shrink away and condemn the woman as slovenly, because "there is no excuse for dirt however poor one is." You smile sarcastically with your comrade over the cheap, flimsy finery the children wear. Yet even this apparently fair criticism is prejudice if you have not tried to realise the life of the woman. Perhaps she is burdened with a poverty that would be crushing to you, and is taking the two babies to see their old grandmother who gave them that cheap lace collar and the imitation coral beads. It has been hard to get off so early and leave everything ready for her husband's supper, and the little baby fell on the slippery crossing and got muddy.

"Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou can'st not see.
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's clear sight may only be
A scar won from some well fought field
Where thou would'st only shrink and yield." [3]

[3] A. A. Procter.

IV

Prejudice makes us dwindle, shrivel and grow wrinkled like a dry pea. What can we do to become more open-minded? I will suggest three ways:

1. The cultivation of sympathy by first-hand experience.

2. The search for truth.

3. The practice of humour in regard to our own affairs.

1. Prejudice is always due to second-hand or inadequate knowledge. If, having felt how narrowing prejudice is we can turn our attention toward finding out *more* of that against which we are prejudiced, we shall soon see the prejudice vanishing like fog in the heat of the sun. Why do I hate history or despise the Japanese? In all probability because the history I plodded through at school was dry, and because I only know the Japanese by hearsay. Some day I come across Rhodes' "History of the United States," where the drama of the upheaval and development of our country in its fight against slavery is pictured, and I find it as exciting as a novel. The blended right and wrong of both North and South, the pathetically stupid mistakes of reconstruction which only increased the irritation of the wounded South, the noble courtesy of Lee, Lincoln's patient wisdom and the agony of the country in his death, all these become alive. It is not history that bores me, but the dry bones of history that I was forced to gnaw at school.

I have been prejudiced against the Japanese because

people have told me that though outwardly courteous they are unfaithful and mean. "I have had eleven Japanese cooks and every one left in a few weeks without any real excuse." This sounds most unsatisfactory until I get a further clue. "No, you can't keep Japs any length of time," says a second woman, "they are always trying to go off to school." This largely accounts for it. The Japanese are unsatisfactory as servants partly because they are progressive, and use the money gained as servants to prepare themselves to be something better than servants. To be unprejudiced about the Japanese is not to respect everything they do. It is the effort to see as much as one can of the reasons for their acts, and never to condemn until we have understood.

The sentiment of the lines:

> "I do not like you Dr. Fell,
> The reason why I cannot tell,"

has often been commended as expressing an infallibly true instinct. But ten to one the dislike was due to prejudice, and the only way to find out whether it is prejudice or not is to know *why* you dislike the doctor. It is as likely as not to be because he uses a toothpick in public, or because he is corpulent, and once knowing this you can prevent yourself from turning your face against the good in the man and become aware of his generosity and his devotion to the poor. "Dislike is a disease," says a friend of mine. He does not mean that condemnation or distrust is always

wrong, but that the simple reaction of dislike is, like fear, something to be looked at further till its meaning is clear and it either dies out or is changed into a definite rejection of evil.

And further, the experience (which becomes increasingly common as we look for it), that the best of anyone or anything does not appear until we draw it forth by sympathy, should teach us to subdue prejudice and act on faith in the best. Geology looks stupid from the outside, but I can have faith that it is not so, because physiology, which used to seem equally uninteresting, has become illumined by a closer view. Madeline appears uninteresting on the surface, but perhaps that is because she is shy and so inexpressive, as Louise used to be before I knew her. "We ought at least to do a man as much justice as a picture and put him in a good light," Emerson says. If you are tempted to be prejudiced against any person, try to draw out his strong points. Many people are uninteresting or uninviting on several sides. It is no more use banging away on these than on the doorless side of a house. But while there may be positively no entrance from the side of social skill or of literary taste, you may find an open door on the side of athletics or of cooking.

2. The second great help in the treatment of prejudice is the search for truth. The truth-seeker can never allow himself to be prejudiced because thereby he would injure what he cares for most. Because experience has taught him how many and how unexpected are the sources of error he withholds judgment

until proof is overwhelming. Scientific training stimulates this habit of suspending judgment by showing up the irretrievable failures of the careless and prejudiced. It eradicates superstition, which is one of the commonest forms of prejudice. You do not find a scientific man with a belief that it is unlucky to break a mirror or to sit thirteen at table. He knows that the evidence does not warrant it.

3. A third great help toward open-mindedness is the cultivation of a sense of humour with regard to your own affairs, for humour like sympathy involves a withdrawal from preoccupation and so a truer perspective. If we watch people who are markedly lacking in humour we usually find that they are fanatic, touchy, or narrow-minded. We often hear the expression: "He takes himself too seriously." There is truth in the idea though it is inaccurately expressed. Life is serious; we can hardly take it too earnestly, but we often take our bit of it disproportionately. "How is your wife?" asked the friends of a careworn housekeeper a century ago. "Oh, Sal's all beat out," was the answer; "a fly got into the best parlour and she's been cleaning up after it all day." That fly, looming large and darkening the sky like the monstrous crow in "Through the Looking-Glass," shut out all the horizon. It would quickly have dwindled could she have felt the humour of the situation and the absurd size of that fly in relation to the scheme of the universe.

There was a picture in "Punch" some years ago of an awkward stout gentleman evidently making his first effort at riding. A little Irish boy stands jeeringly on

the sidewalk and calls out: "Say, sir, ye ought to get off and see yourself ride!" It is the power of seeing ourselves ride that humour gives, and by so seeing ourselves we get a better perspective than is possible when we are jammed close to the high wall of our immediate success or failure.

That such humour can be cultivated is, I believe, proved by experience. Compared with the glee of the bystanders, it is often a very forced laugh at myself that I give when I pull myself out of the mud puddle in which I have fallen, but any laugh is better than none and I shall laugh more easily a second time. To see the funny side of the situation is to withdraw a bit from the vivid realisation of how dirty my clothes are, and see what a ludicrous object I am.

It is often the same power which helps one to overcome the tense narrowness of anger. Two girls of thirteen went up to bed very much out of temper last winter because they thought I had been unfair in sending them up so early. Solemnity and righteous wrath were strongly written on their faces and they meant never to forgive or forget the insult to their dignity. As they silently entered their chamber, a mirror suddenly showed them the absurd twists of their countenances and both at once burst out laughing. The mirror had revealed the minuteness of the affair.

Who has not been in a crowded and hot electric car and scowled to see more passengers coming up the steps, and to cap the climax heard the trolley slip off? As the conductor vainly struggles to set the trolley straight what a relief it gives to the tensity of our feel-

ings to hear someone call out: "By Jove, this car is so crowded that even the trolley can't get on!"

Mr. Dooley's articles have been not merely a joy and refreshment to the nation, but they have taught some of the truths we needed most and taught them in the way in which they could best be received and remembered. His article on Christian Science with its brilliant assertion that if the Christian Scientists only had a little more science and the doctors a little more Christianity all would be well, thrust gaily home a double-edged truth that made for open-mindedness.

We can open the tight shell of prejudice and become open-minded by developing in ourselves the habit of appreciation, the love of truth, and the impartiality of humour.

# CHAPTER XXII

## SELF-GOVERNMENT

### I

We are so accustomed to the phrases of democracy that their familiarity blurs the extraordinary significance of self-government. Yet to one who had never heard of the idea it would seem absurd and self-contradictory. "It takes at least two to make a government," he would maintain, "one to command and one to submit. Self-government can have no meaning, for the ruler and the servant are one. If the debtor were his own creditor the debt would be cancelled."

Yet self-government is not only a familiar political aspiration, it is also the touchstone of moral life. There is no moral life until we begin to make and to follow our own laws. All advance in character consists in making me obey Me. We practise self-government when we obey the laws of our State. "Get off the grass!" shouts the policeman who disturbs your luxurious rest in the public park. As you reluctantly move on, it does not occur to you that you are obeying yourself, yet your vote helped to elect the legislator who voted to pass the park statutes, and a fraction of the taxes you pay provides part of the salary of the policeman who is thus annoying you. You are ordering yourself off the grass.

The significance of self-government is still more evident when there is no policeman to visibly embody and execute your will. "I only wish I could go with you to see Mansfield in 'Henry V.,' but I simply must study to-night." Who is servant and who is ruler when I thus order myself about and cut off a desired pleasure for the sake of mastering some dry pages of history? I, that is my larger or more enduring purpose, commands and subdues the eager impulse whose fulfilment would injure my real aim, as the loafer crushes the newly planted grass which he nevertheless wishes to have grow.

From these examples we see that self-government is never an escape from government. Whether I submit to the decrees of the Czar or hold loyally to my own chosen plans when I am tempted to forsake them, I still am law-abiding, but only in proportion as I obey my *own* law am I free.

II

Some examples of the ascent from servitude to self-government will illustrate this distinction. A terrified and fettered slave follows absolutely his master's slightest command. We do not commend his virtue, for the dreaded whip and the hope-killing years of bondage have crushed his initiative. He is almost as machine-like as the ship which must obey the turn of the rudder. It is often convenient for a master to have this unreasoning, unquestioning submission. But he buys it only at the cost of crushing intelligence and

making the man a machine, a weather-cock, which cannot resist the wind that blows upon it.

The life of a man who is ruled by his own impulses and passions seems at first sight very different from that of the slave. Such a man thinks himself as free as air. Cannot he do exactly what he wants with every minute of his time? He is not held with his nose to the grindstone like men who have to earn their living.

One day such a man decides that he will do a stroke of work just for a change, and suddenly finds that he can no more carry forward any concentrated or consecutive work than he can lift a barrel of lead. As soon as he begins to read a serious book he has an irresistible impulse to smoke a cigarette or to look out of the window. He has yielded to his impulses all his life and now he is their slave. It takes a strong and persistent will to throw off the servitude into which he has fallen. He is like a fettered convict with meagre chances of escape.

At the two extremes of absolute subservience to the will of any master or to our whim, we are equally slaves, and so insidious is the approach of the ensnaring habit that there are few who have not some part of themselves tangled in its stifling web. It is only one person in a thousand who can hold himself so intent on his work that he does not automatically obey the impulse to look up if he hears a rustle at the door, or whose mind does not slip uncontrolledly away during some part of a lecture.

Such servitude (to whim or despot) is clearly dis-

tinguished from self-government in that the slave submits to a master, the disciple accepts one. Military discipline may look exactly like penal servitude, yet it may mean freedom because the subordinate has chosen to enlist, has identified himself with the army, and can honourably retire from service at the end of his term. Even in cases of disastrous blunders, such as the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, the soldiers are still identified with the army and may realise that in order to carry out any complicated plan the army must act as a unit.

In war the subaltern has but little self-government or fresh initiative beyond his first agreement to enlist and his power to retire or re-enlist at the end of his term. But in war we encounter a condition rare in other parts of life, the need that an immense body of men shall act in entire unity. The leader of the Light Brigade was right to obey even the blundering command of his superior, because he knew that any refusal on his part might defeat some plan of the campaign that involved other branches of the army. To assert his own judgment would be to destroy the unity essential to the success of the army. When such need of instant and united action exists, submission to authority is essential. We see this in a storm at sea. The captain must for the time be a despot. There is no time to consult the men. The democratic form of government: "It is moved and seconded that we lower the jib; all in favor will say aye," is entirely out of place. But though we have to revert to a momentary tyranny whenever there is need of instant and combined

action, such tyranny, if long continued, develops a mechanical response to command that is fatal to initiative and at last to intelligence.

Professor James tells the story of an old soldier who when his fighting days were over took a position as butler. One day a military man, who was calling on the family in whose house the old soldier served, noticed the erect bearing of the butler as he brought in the tea cups and shouted: "Attention! Present arms!" Instantly the old man's hands went up and the tea cups crashed on the ground. This machine-like obedience so useful in war is disastrous in peace and those who demand it except in emergencies will smash what is more valuable than the best of china.

Mr. Alleyne Ireland was some years ago employed as an engineer by an English company in the Straits Settlements. One morning when he came to report to the overseer he received the order to light fires under the boilers of engines numbers 8, 13, and 14. Mr. Ireland knew that there was no water in boiler number 13, but he also knew that the overseer invariably desired unquestioning obedience. "Did I understand you to say numbers 8, 13, and 14?" Mr. Ireland asked. "8, 13, and 14," was the reply. "All right, sir." Half an hour later Mr. Ireland came back to report: "I regret to say that there was no water in boiler number 13 and the melting of the floor has caused a loss of about £200."

The overseer looked up sharply for an instant, and then said simply, "Very well, you may go." But

as Ireland was leaving the office, the overseer called him back: "One moment, Ireland! If I ever tell you to do such a thing again, *do it!*"

The overseer in this case preferred to have an automaton to do his work rather than an intelligent man who would act not on the literal order, but on a reasonable interpretation of that order. There are many parents who demand the same unreasoning obedience with its convenient definiteness and silence. They forget that they are crushing out of their children the power to make intelligent decisions when they can no longer be governed by their parents.

There come times when the subservient child is left like Casabianca in Mrs. Hemans' poem, alone on the burning deck. Brought up with an overwhelming loyalty to the letter of his father's command, he resolutely stays where he has been told to stay till the flames destroy him. How can such unreasoning submission fail to cause death, moral death if not physical? If there had not been in the poem a flavour of sentimentality that has laid it open to parody, it might have done real harm by holding up an ideal of unquestioning subservience under conditions when such subservience means insanity.

Robert Browning in a letter written to Elizabeth Barrett, at a time when she hesitated to take a trip to Italy for her health because of her father's vehement opposition, gives with equal fairness and firmness the principles underlying both obedience and self-government.

"I truly wish you may never feel what I have to bear in looking on quite powerless and silent while you are subjected to this treatment which I refuse to characterise, so blind is it for blindness. You ask whether you should obey this 'No-Reason'? I will tell you. All passive obedience and implicit submission of will and intellect is by far too easy. Chop off your legs, you will never go astray, stifle your reason altogether and you will find it difficult to reason ill. . . . There is no reward proposed for the feat of breathing and a great one for that of believing, consequently there must go a great deal more of effort to this latter than is implied in the getting rid of it at once by adopting the direction of an infallible church or private judgment of another, for all our life is some form of religion, and all our action some belief, and there is but one law however modified for the greater and the less. In your case I do think you are called upon to do your duty to yourself,—that is to God in the end. Your own reason should examine the matter in dispute by every light that can be put in requisition,—and every interest that appears to be affected by your conduct should have its utmost claims considered,—your father's in the first place and that interest not in the miserable limits of a few days' pique or whim; but in its whole extent . . . the hereafter which all rudimentary passion prevents his seeing. . . . And this examination made with whatever earnestness you will, I do think and am sure that on its conclusion you should act in confidence that a duty has been performed, difficult or how were it a duty? Will it not be infinitely harder to act so than to blindly adopt his pleasure and die under it? Who cannot do that? I fling these hasty rough words over the paper fast as they will fall, knowing to whom I cast them and that any sense they contain or point to will be caught and understood and presented in a better light.

"The hard thing, this is what I want to say, is to act on one's own best conviction, not to abjure it and accept an-

other will and say there is my plain duty, easy it is whether plain or no."[1]

Elizabeth Barrett in recognising the truth of Browning's words, escaped out of the servitude of fear and entangling habit into the freedom of self-government. Under different conditions she might just as freely have accepted as her own the will of her parents, as a householder who wants a strongly built house accepts the trained judgment of the carpenter as better than and representative of his own. For since self-government is always in part representative government, freedom consists not in the refusal to submit to authority, but in the choice of the authority which you accept.

Nor is instant obedience uncharacteristic of self-government, though if the act has any moral significance its principle must at some time have been thought out. Anyone who has a clear and definite purpose will in an emergency follow any leader whose judgment he respects *more* quickly than will the undisciplined mind. His training and purpose will make him more, not less, capable of taking a subordinate part in a game or in any situation which requires team-play. He will show the power to carry out without hesitation any course of conduct however hard or disagreeable, which he has once deliberately accepted as essential to his plan.

III

All this analysis of self-government shows that

[1] "Letters of Robert and Elizabeth Browning," vol. i., pp. 220, 221.

there is no situation which does not involve obedience, but that acceptance of the authority of your own purpose is self-government. As we attain manhood and put away childish things, we must more and more follow our own calling. It will lead us to obey the laws of our state or of our parents in so far as they are expressive of our truest will, but in many cases the very strength of our devotion to the best we know will make us seem disloyal to those who cannot see our aim.

In the life of Martin Luther, seen in its relation to the Reformation movement, we have an example that illustrates this point. From the point of view of the Church of Rome Luther was utterly disobedient, for in the face of the Pope and Council he insisted on his heretical doctrine.

"Unless I be convicted of error by the scriptures or by powerful reasons, neither can I nor will I dare to retract anything. It is dangerous to act against one's conscience. . . . Here stand I. . . . I can do no otherwise. God help me." Yet these are not the words of one wilfully disobedient. On the contrary, underlying his disobedience to the Pope, and forcing him to that disobedience as the pressure within forces the eruption of a mountain, was a controlling loyalty, a higher obedience. Luther is so wholly obedient to the law of conscience, that he must disobey the law of the church. The case of Luther is not an exceptional one and the truth it exemplifies is important. Obedience and disobedience are parts of a single act seen from different points of view.

William Penn was imprisoned again and again for

disobedience to authority because he was constantly and persistently loyal to conviction, not alone in preaching the heretical Quaker doctrine, but in refusing to take any oath,—even the oath of allegiance, because of his literal acceptance of the biblical command: Swear not at all. Even the apparently arbitrary refusal to remove his hat in the presence of anyone, be he peasant or king, was symbolic of loyalty to God which refused obeisance to man. As the moon is dark on the side unillumined by the sun, so Penn's stubborn non-conformity to the laws and customs of England looks dark until we see it in the light of his loyalty to his conviction.

I have tried to show that to become self-governing is to become more, not less, law-abiding, for self-government means the control and subordination of our unruly whims, in order that we may freely fulfil our contracts. I make an agreement with my publishers to have my book ready to print by the first of October. This decision is my free choice, but as soon as I have made it I am bound in loyalty to fulfil my contract, and that means cutting off pleasures which I should otherwise have had. I am asked on a trip to Mexico, but in order to keep my contract, I must refuse and keep steadily at work. All my family are going to see a polo game and urge me to come. My impulse to go must be held back firmly for the sake of obedience to my chosen task.

The obligation is the same if the ideal I have chosen concerns other people more closely. I have decided to devote the year to helping an invalid brother work

out for himself the utmost he can make of his cramped life by trial of different climates and occupations. That decision commands me, forbids any severing of purpose, directs and orders my days in conformity to its decrees.

IV

There is just as much obedience in self-government as there is in slavery. The question is: Shall we obey the tyranny of our whims, habits and fears, or the commanding voice of our calling? What then is the value of self-government above that of submission to any external command? Wholly this. Self-government develops initiative and forethought, and thus makes one capable of meeting new issues. Submission stunts character and makes it so automatic that it can work only in the familiar grooves.

The value of self-government as moral training is shown unmistakably in the work of the George Junior Republic at Freeville, New York. About ten years ago when Mr. William George took a number of poor boys on a country outing, he noticed with great interest how much more loyally they held to a rule agreed to by the group than to any command of his. As he thought this over it occurred to him that a miniature community might be formed in which the boys and girls themselves should make and be governed by their own laws instead of by the rules made by any older person. Mr. George decided that the penalties for disobedience to their laws and the enforcement of these penalties should be in the hands of the children them-

selves. He reserved for himself only the position of Judge of the Supreme Court, a court of final appeal in case any very difficult question arose. In all other respects the boys and girls were made absolutely self-governing. They have their own bank, with money of the Republic in aluminum coin, they choose the employment which they prefer at current wages, or if they choose not to work they take the consequences and are sent to the poorhouse where the scanty food provided by the severe laws of the industrious community soon makes work more attractive than the results of idleness.

Almost anyone imagining beforehand the effects of such unrestrained liberty on children of poor and often criminal associations, would have prophesied complete disaster and anarchy. Was it likely that untrained, ignorant children, taken without any question as to character from the city streets, would make rules that would restrain their own impulses to license?

The results of Mr. George's experiment have indeed been against all appearances, but true to reality. Boys who were ready to steal in the streets of New York have found that they do not want stealing in their own community. The need for laws against larceny is quickly seen when one is a property holder. The class of boys whose impulse it has been for years to smoke cigarettes have made it an offence even to have tobacco in one's possession. The rules by which the citizens of the George Junior Republic govern themselves are far stricter than those an older person could have enforced. A little chap who pilfered apples

from the neighbouring farmers, was put on probation for three months by the boy judge and warned that any repetition of the offence will mean heavy fines or imprisonment.

The George Junior Republic is making real to its citizens the truth that in so far as we do anything in the world we must be obedient to the claims and commands implied by that undertaking and that when we live together we must respect one another's freedom.

Such boys coming back to citizenship in the United States, will have a permanent realisation of the common sense of law, for they know what it means to make and execute laws as well as unwillingly to submit to them. They will understand the words of Lincoln that democracy is "government of the people by the people and for the people," for they will know that they are not merely individuals or members of a family, but part of the community in which the good of all is the good of each.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE USE OF TIME

### I

Some years ago I came across an article on Time in which the following illustration was used. A boat has drifted out to sea and in it a girl lies fast asleep, while the long broken chain of her pearl necklace hangs over the boat's edge and pearl after pearl drops into the ocean. The situation is more picturesque than probable, but the illustration of the irrecoverableness of wasted time is vivid and accurate. The days drop one by one into oblivion while we dream contentedly on, but sometimes at anniversaries or when we face a long piece of work, we wake with a start to realise that time is precious and that it is slipping away. With what clasp can we hold the days and years together? The difficulty of the answer depends on the almost contradictory character of time. It cannot be saved and stored away like money, and curiously enough to have it pass slowly is not to use it economically. It is one of the strange characteristics of time that it goes fastest when we are getting most out of it. The endlessness of an hour at the dentist's or while waiting for a train in a hot railroad station is proverbial, but it is not in such hours of intense consciousness of every second that we save time. The full

value of time like the full value of money is got, not by hoarding it, but by spending it for what will bring the greatest return. The miser who never spends a cent for any but the bare necessities of existence is as poor as though all his coin were counterfeit, and anyone who grudges the time spent on what adds significance to his life is weighed down as futilely as the miser with his money bags.

Time is the raw material of all life; its many uses are found only when we learn to convert the hard grain into nourishment. It is not until our time is moulded and held together by a warm interest that it begins to be of value to us, and we get more and more out of time in proportion to the intensity, the width, and the loyalty of our interest. There is but one way of saving time. We save time by spending it liberally in the enriching and fulfilling of our individual aim.

There are two points of importance in this definition: (1) We cannot tell in the least whether anyone is saving or wasting time until we know his aim, and (2) the ways of saving time are as various as are the different interests people follow. Louis Agassiz lying for hours motionless in the woods is using time to the full, for he is attaining the knowledge of birds which is his purpose. In the thick of a fire raging in a tenement house a man is rushing from room to room with untiring activity. He is wasting his time. No thought goes into his work, for he throws mirrors out of the fifth story window, and carefully carries a mattress down the stairs.

II

If saving time means spending it liberally in the attainment and enlarging of our purpose, we waste time in one of two ways: (1) By not having any aim, and (2) by disloyalty to the aim we have chosen. We all know how an aimless collegian will waste his money, but it is even more true that he will waste his time. There is nothing to prevent his doing whatever he is asked, nothing to make him hold and assimilate the mouthful of experience he snatches from passing bushes as he browses along. It is only when he gets a definite and steady aim that he pulls up and chooses among the tempting morsels that dangle above him, those which will feed his purpose. Men do ten times as much and fifty times as satisfactory work in the professional schools as in college, because by that time they have begun to hear like the roar of a cataract the strong and steady sound of their chosen work.

Thus the first recipe for saving time is to know what you want to spend it for. Two women go shopping. One looks in every window and is attracted by a bit of lace, a bargain sale of furs or a Japanese auction. She wanders into a store, cannot decide what she wants, finds the bargains poor, wanders out, and finally after spending the whole afternoon "shopping" comes home with half a pound of candy. The second makes a list beforehand of what she wants and of the shops in which she can get it. She goes straight to the spot, turning resolutely aside from all temptations, buys what she needs and is back in an hour.

It is often noticed that it is the busiest people who have most time. No wonder. They have clear and definite aims which they constantly serve. What we observe in such people is first of all their concentration. As soon as a decision is to be made or an act carried out their whole attention is on it. There is a list to be made of people to be invited to a musical. The leisurely person drifts along, speaking of any names that occur to her, and discussing by the way the manners and customs of each guest. The busy man takes a sheet of paper and a visiting list and, going through the list alphabetically, he notes down on paper every name he wants. The leisurely person is so engrossed and excited over the great event of the musical that she never entirely puts the thought of it aside and interrupts anything she is doing to write one more address. She is like a hen with one chicken in her cackling eagerness, and devotes more scratching and twisting to the one great event of her musical than the busy person gives to a dozen business undertakings.

As soon as we are in the habit of guiding ourselves by our aim, instead of being tossed about by the waves of circumstance, we cease to kill time and consequently we have more than those who murder their odd moments. Chance events bring all of us now and then to places where the train is late or the oculist keeps us waiting. It is at such times of intermission between the acts that many people proceed to kill time, by drifting off like a log in the line of least resistance. There are other people, however, who, instead of killing

time welcome the chance of filling the time. They look round at once for the best that can be discovered. A pocket edition of Shakspere or of Lincoln's addresses is always their travelling companion, and they seize the chance to read; there is a new type of locomotive on the track which they want to study, or an interesting looking woman sitting opposite with whom the common misfortune makes an opening for a good talk.

People of definite aims also have more time because having economised time in unimportant decisions or routine work, they are liberal in spending time whenever they find what is well worth while. These people know the inestimable value of friendship and they do not leave it to chance meetings. One of the most loyal workers I ever knew was an artist whose devotion to her work often kept her busy from five in the morning till twelve at night. "People have a right to expect that you will be true to your contract," she would say, "and when I promise that a stained glass window shall be ready for a birthday gift or a memorial service, I will keep my word at any cost." Yet this busy artist always had a life-giving welcome full of the glow of realisation for each of her friends. "I have just fifteen minutes before an appointment. Come right in and we will make the very most of it."

Watch the lives of the people who are guided by the illumination of a clear ideal, and you will notice both how freely they give of their time, their strength, their money to the cause they serve and how austerely and resolutely they refuse distractions. They are loyal

to their aim. Aimlessness and disloyalty are the thieves of time—procrastination is but one of their numerous offspring.

Those forms of disloyalty, which hide under the cover of goodness, are more subtly destructive than the rest. It is often said, and more often implied by our conduct, that certain occupations are always good for everyone. To read Shakspere is surely never a waste of time for anybody! Yes, it is. Just in so far as at any time it holds you from your own work instead of being a help, direct or indirect, toward it. Shakspere's work is indeed so human and comprehensive that there is hardly any activity it may not enrich at some time, but how easy it is to persuade myself that it really would be all wrong to miss seeing "As You Like It," when the compass of my own work points hard away from any interruption. Unfaithfulness is not inactivity, but following any other than the path which will lead to my goal.

"But surely it is never a waste of time to do a kind act." Yes, it sometimes is, for it is often a weak kind-heartedness which lets one spend on odds and ends of errands for anyone who asks it, the time that steadily used would build up a fruitful life. Unless such fragmentary kindliness is one's special work it is as much a dissipation as is the buying of sticks of candy and bananas with the odd pennies which when accumulated will buy a barrel of flour.

This does not mean that amusement or variety or kindness are to be put aside for the sake of strict adherence to a single line of advance. All work and no

play makes Jack so dull a boy that the dulness taints even his laborious results. Thus arises the duty of pleasure side by side with the pleasure of duty. The artist who stands all the time close to his palette soon sees nothing but blotches of paint, or fails to distinguish what is expressive from what is unmeaning. He finds the beauty of his first conception fade, and to do his own work as well as it can be done, he must go out to find refreshment wherever it blossoms for him, —on the distant hills, at the theatre, or with the gayest of comrades. While he is away from his work he may wholly forget it, but as he looks back later he measures the value of the amusement in relation to the movement of his life as a whole, in which his painting is the mainspring.

"The longest way about is the shortest way home" is in this connection a true proverb, for the stimulus of books and people, football games and sunsets that seem remote from our work often call out a fruitful activity that could not be won by plodding. But to drop down in a strawberry patch entirely oblivious of anything but the juicy fruit is not often finding the shortest way home. There are myriad examples of disloyal waste of time, but they are nearly all of the type of strawberry picking on the way home. There is a carelessness which drops into work without planning. "I threw all my clothes into my trunk as quickly as I could and now I find I have forgotten the dress I most need."

There is repetition of what is already sufficiently achieved. To go over again a well-learned lesson or

a well-written paper is a waste of time, because it does not take one toward home.

There is inattention which lets us jump up to look at the passing fire engine in the midst of our work, and dawdling which shows that we are not alive to the significance of what we are doing. These common ways of wasting time all lead us off into side tracks instead of taking us toward home.

How shall we distinguish such disloyalty from a rightful breadth of life? Only by taking every now and then a quiet time in which to face what it is that will make our lives most what we want them to be. Then if looking at fire engines or going once more over our lesson will on the whole further that life at any time, these acts are right; if not, they are wrong. For many of us the best life will aim to include time for reading, for our favourite form of art, for quiet in which to garner the harvests of the past and prepare for the future, and above all free space to welcome to help and to be enriched by our friends.

The hospitality of our purpose will thus include what on a smaller view might seem to lead away from it, but though in many cases it will be hard to decide just what time is best spent in recreation, the test will always be the same. Is what I am doing enriching my aim or is it dissipating it?

Franklin in his ingenious "Poor Richard's Almanac," says: "If you were a servant would you not be ashamed to have your master catch you idle? You are your own master. Be ashamed to catch yourself idle!" How many of us are there who have not

caught ourselves idle in the midst of our task? How many have used every minute of the hour we planned for work? "Time goes so fast," we say; "it is impossible to accomplish much in a day." Yes, especially when in many of its minutes we have been untrue to our aim. "Profligacy," says Emerson, "does not consist in spending years of time or chests of money, but in spending them off the line of your career." We waste time by carelessness, by not planning ahead, by repetition, by inattention, by dawdling, by forgetting, by worry and indecision, and all these faults show disloyalty to our aim. It is because men on the whole have a clearer aim and keener training in learning its importance that they waste less time than the average woman of leisure who has not found her vocation.

III

Since time is the raw material of life, we must, in order to make our lives worth while, know how to handle and mould our hours in accordance with our ends. These ends are different for each, but there are certain means to success which are common to all ends. We need to know:

1. How to begin.
2. How to keep on.
3. When to end.

Half the trouble with most people comes from not knowing how to begin. A young friend of mine has just failed in his college examinations. When he came

in to tell me about it he said: "I don't see how it happened, for I have studied twice as much as the other fellows." I have no doubt he thought that he had studied, but it was in a peculiar way. He planned to study from two till six. About two you would hear him say: "Oh, bother it! I have got such a beastly hard Latin lesson." At half-past two you would find him looking over a funny paper. By three o'clock he had begun to work, but it was not long before his seat was empty. An irresistible hunger had driven him to the kitchen for apples. He has never learned how to begin, and that lack will grow greater with every indulgence.

The difficulty is almost as wide as humanity. Nearly everyone finds it hard to begin, but certain special directions may help to make it easier. It is a great help to put yourself in a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted or distracted. Avoid rooms where the sound of voices or the ring of the doorbell can easily be heard, and keep away from windows opening on a busy street. On the positive side one of the greatest helps to concentration is saturation in your subject or, if the subject itself is dry, in the aim toward which you are working. If the boy who failed to begin work had called up before himself in all its vividness the joy and interest of college life and the ignominy of failure, his attention would have turned irresistibly toward his work. One great difficulty in beginning is parallel to that which we feel in talking with a stranger. Our minds are remote and full of other sympathies and do not welcome the alien. But when

we picture the significance of our work it ceases to feel alien and we greet it as a friend.

Two other practical hints I have found of use.

(1) If you always find difficulty in beginning, leave your work the day before with its hardest points so far mastered that there will be an easy and therefore an alluring bit on which to start in the morning.

(2) If you find yourself dull and listless in beginning work so that your mind wanders constantly or the work is so poorly done that it all has to be done over and the big stitches picked out, it is often a help to wake yourself up by what one of my friends calls a "Shakspere cocktail," that is by reading a bit of Shakspere, or of any literature that most rouses and stimulates you. Those whom literature does not quickly rouse may find an equivalent stimulus in five minutes' exercise with the windows open, or in a short discussion of the subject in hand with a friend.

After we have learned how to begin we have won a critical part of the battle, but not all of it. In almost any new work there is an easy piece at the beginning into which we rush with the zest of a fresh experience. Then comes a long uphill pull, and it is only after many discouragements that we get our second wind and exult in the steep places more than in the easy grades. It is during the first uphill stretch that we need to know how to keep on. It may be that what we need is a short change, a brisk walk, or a different occupation for a time, but in the main the directions are like those for the beginning. What really holds us to our task is either the habit of work learned through many

days of practice, or it is the vivid realisation of what it is which makes the hard work well worth while. As I look back to what has seemed drudgery in work, I remember it most strongly in work whose meaning I did not appreciate. If my teachers had succeeded in making me see and feel why I was studying French or history, or that the study called "literature" was of the same nature as the stories I loved to read, I could have gone at it with renewed zeal. It is always by recalling *why* we are working that we can make ourselves really want the means because we want the end.

I have said that the secret of saving time is to have an interest and to hold to it, and that we hold to it most loyally by realising it as if it were a star by which we were steering. The star grows dim when the fog of forgetfulness obscures it, but if we have once clearly seen what our work means in its full outcome and income, we can drive away any fog by the warmth of memory. Phillips Brooks said that even though the day labourer could dig a ditch to earn a dollar a day, he would dig it better if he realised that he was digging it for the great thirsty city; the stupidest work can be quicker and better done if it is seen as part of the making of a home. The home of everyone is in his strongest interest, whatever that may be, and it is by drawing that interest into the full light of day that he will hold himself to his best work.

4. How to end.

It is by the same outlook at the significance of our work that we learn when to put it aside. There comes

a time in any occupation when we begin to put more and more energy into what we accomplish and get smaller and smaller returns. Unless we are held by some pressing contract this is the time to end and to end decisively. To use time well we must learn to distinguish this point from the protestations of our laziness, and when we reach it to cut work short with a good clean stroke. The inertia which made it hard to start will often make it hard to stop when the machine has begun to turn; in both cases we can save time by withdrawal from the immediate occupation and by recollection of what it is we are trying to accomplish in the long run. It is the fresh view, the orderly view, the clear view of our work from such a distance as will let us see it as a whole, which will help us to begin, to keep on, and to end well.

IV

In discussing the use of time we are of course dealing with all moral questions, since, as I said, time is the material out of which life can be moulded. The need of a whole-hearted interest, and of loyalty and open-mindedness in the service of that interest, is the motive of every chapter in this book.

As all roads lead to Rome because it is the capital city of the nation, so the journey of any successful and efficient life is guided by signposts pointing always to the goal of its purpose. How can we save time? Only by having a warm controlling interest to which we are loyal. Without such an interest we are tossed

about like drifting seaweed; with it we climb higher and higher, building, like the coral insects, a structure of beauty and strength out of our lives. It is the glow and zest of our aim which makes us ourselves; without it we are like passing shadows on a wall, the reflection of the people about us. Our living interest makes us value time as the opportunity to express that interest.

Virtues are simply the necessary means to the fulfilment of any aim. In these days of secure protection by police and fire departments, it might seem as though there were little need of courage, but just as soon as I decide to play baseball or to win a prize at school I have got to show courage in all its forms. I must have the courage to take criticism, the courage to stick to my work, the courage to refuse distractions, the courage to attack a new task that looks impossible, the courage to meet possible failure in the right spirit, the courage to take responsibility. To use time well we need all the virtues. To use it in work we need imagination and courage to begin, memory to keep on, truthfulness and open-mindedness to stop, disinterestedness to choose our work. In proportion as my interest is strong and growing I shall require more courage of myself, more patience, more devotion, more open-mindedness and truth.

This is why we see the finest characters among those children who are devoted to a baby sister; this is why the boy who is absorbed in clay modeling develops truthfulness, sympathy and self-control. He knows that in order to use his time in the swiftest

furtherance of his aim he must have these virtues. In old times people were told to cultivate the virtues for their own sake. You might as well expect flowers to grow when cut off from their roots. Virtues grow from the root of interest and flower in the strong sunlight of love.

# TEACHERS' KEY

# TEACHERS' KEY

## INTRODUCTION

The teacher of ethics has an incomparable opportunity to arouse interest in his subject, because moral questions have already been eagerly discussed by his pupils out of school. Girls and boys of thirteen to eighteen rarely read history or study mathematics of their own accord or apart from any lesson, but there is no one who has not to some extent been roused by questions of right and wrong. If we are to make vivid to children the granting of the Magna Charta, we have to lift them by our enthusiasm to places largely undreamed of by them; but when we discuss fair play or honour, their own experience comes instantly to the fore.

My aim in this book is to take up the living issues already present to girls and boys of thirteen to eighteen, and to work out thoroughly the problems which they themselves have begun to feel and discuss but which they rarely carry far. I wish to connect these questions with aspects of their lives other than those of school,—with athletics, with society, with any kind of art which appeals to them or any story they may be reading, and above all with any striking event which may have interested them. At the outset the teacher of ethics carefully culls and dangles before the pupil's eyes problems which he knows by experience will make their mouths water, but by the end of the term he will know that he has failed unless they are *bringing problems to him* and enriching his material in every lesson. I think the teacher of ethics has not been successful unless the outlook of the students has markedly widened, so that their interest in local and national politics, and their study of history and literature shine with light reflected from the class discussions.

There is, so far as I know, no systematic book on ethics written for students of thirteen to eighteen, and written with the point of view of giving increasingly solid food to interests already hungry. There are books for younger children, but many of them are tinged with a sentimentalism which makes healthy children reject them; there are many sugar-coated moral stories, often good, but unsystematic, and so not developing thoughtfulness. Finally there are many technical books on ethics designed, primarily, for college students, and unintelligible to school boys and girls.

This book is based on a ten years' experience in teaching ethics which has led me to reject much I once thought valuable, and to add more and more from the treasure-house of biography and literature. There the most indelible moral lessons are found,—lessons which are the better assimilated because they are not crammed down, but drunk in for their own sake.

I have left out many subjects ordinarily discussed in ethical text-books. No one under twenty who is not precocious or morbid is interested in the discussion of free will; it is assumed as instinctively as free breathing. No one brought up in a healthy society seriously maintains as true the doctrine of egoistic hedonism, however much at times he may act on it. The great Kantian doctrine of the good will as the only good, is equally unappealing to active boys and girls. Hence I have touched but little the questions of ethical motive, of pleasure-seeking, and of freedom.

I want this book to be a cluster of glowing experiences, fresh with their own meaning; therefore I have kept references to authors out of the text and have given in the Teachers' Key references not only to books on ethics, but to books of general literature which, because alive, are full of moral significance.

Essential to my plan is the method of teaching by questions which are answered by the pupils before a subject is discussed in class. Definite questions are magnets attracting interest, and those who have distinctly committed them-

selves by written answers on any subject, bring to the lesson a keen intelligence, most stimulating to all the members of the class and to the teacher. The questions cling to the students like winged seeds during the days in which they are pondering them, and often attach themselves in unexpected quarters of the school or home. Each teacher should, of course, evolve new questions as fast as new events and new interests touch the community, but the best type of questions will, I believe, have the following characteristics:

1. They will be closely connected with interests already formed by the pupils.

2. They will lead them into new experience.

3. They will be based largely on concrete examples.

4. In so far as they are historical they will make vivid when discussed, some important character or issue.

5. They will never be answerable by a simple yes or no,—*reasons* will always be called for.

6. They will be so framed that differences of opinion about them will naturally arise. Such discussion will lead the class to a reconstruction of opinion from a larger outlook.

7. They will be progressively harder as the year goes on, and will demand more and more that the students themselves shall supply the illustrations.

More and more the pupils should do the work as they grow alert in the desire to find out the truth, and to convince one another and their teacher. The teacher should as soon as possible become merely a steersman in uncertain waters, a leader who in the end points out the one harbour to which many inlets lead. While stating clearly his own view he should avoid dogmatism, and as the lessons advance he should bring up again from another side any question over which the pupils have formerly differed.

I am quite aware that what I have called lessons in ethics might rather be called lessons in thinking. The study of ethics is essentially the effort to think out problems of conduct as sensibly, as fairly, and in as broad and sympathetic a way as we can. I suppose that such a study never directly

helps to make us "good," yet it should be one of the strong influences for good, if through it we become more capable of thinking passionately on burning questions without prejudice, of thinking with warm sympathy about what only distantly touches us, and of thinking straight in spite of the tortuous temptations of sophistry. Such thinking will be still further an influence for good if through it we are led to close acquaintance with the experience of struggle and conquest, of failure, temptation, and life-giving service met by our fellow workers and our predecessors along the path of experience, so that the sound of their voices rings in our ears, their victory our spur, their self-surrender our trumpet-call.

Yet even here we do not reach the profoundest influence of ethical study which ought to help us to find how and where to take our place in the ranks. It is at this goal that my plan aims. There is little about duty in this book because that word has been held so far from direct contact with everyday experience that it has lost its piercing quality except in the military realm where the soldier or the nurse knows that to be "on duty" is to be utterly loyal to your chosen task wherever it may lead you.

My central ethical doctrine is that he who has found the vocation for which he is fitted has found his duty, and that without some inkling of a chosen work duty is meaningless. Out of loyalty to our chosen work springs all moral life, for an enduring interest is a master who leads us to a joyous self-expression and for that very reason to self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and self-surrender.

## METHODS OF TEACHING

The aim of these discussions on ethics is to train the pupils in fair and thorough thinking, to clear their views of right and wrong, to enlarge their experience, and to increase their power of sympathetic and considerate judgment by helping them to know those who have been loyal to their convictions. I have found that this is best accomplished by a series of questions which are answered in writing and the answers handed in *before* each subject is discussed in class.

The special questions here given have all been tested by use in a number of classes. Many have been omitted or changed because I have found them ineffective and unstimulating, and I hope that all who use this book will supply new questions especially adapted to the students whom they teach. No question whose answer is obvious (for example the question: "Is it wrong to cheat?") can possibly be interesting, and I have found that the best and most helpful discussions always arise over questions on which the pupils differ (for example, the question: "Is truthfulness always compatible with courtesy?").

Healthy-minded students are apt to shy away from questions of pointedly personal application (for example, the question: "Is it polite to meet a teacher without saying 'good-morning?'"), and such moral lessons are best taught indirectly or by contagion. Many of my questions are wide-reaching rather than confined to the daily life of the students: first, because I want to enforce the truth that the principles of ethics are universal, and, second, because directly personal applications are better brought up through class discussion than by written answers. In my early experience in teaching I often made my questions too abstract. I found for example that when I asked for the meaning of Milton's line, "They also serve who only stand and wait," the answers

frequently showed entire lack of comprehension, though the question: "In what ways can an invalid be of real use in the world?" would be well answered.

My questions have been planned:

1. To cover without repetition the main issues of the coming topic of discussion.

2. To bear on real experience.

3. To call out interests already possessed by the pupil but not fully thought out.

4. To strike the narrow line between too great difficulty and condescension.

5. To develop the power of reasoning and to awaken imagination and sympathy.

6. To bring out systematically the principles of ethics.

The written answers to each set of questions have in my experience varied in length from two foolscap pages to nineteen. A strict application of the rule that no question is to be answered merely by yes or no, prevents very meagre answers, and if the subject is well-taught the papers will become longer as the pupil realises and holds together the different aspects of moral life.

I have found it wise to let the students discuss the questions freely at home or with any friend, provided that each pupil *writes* his answers by himself. Free discussion of the questions out of school greatly increases the pupils' interest and stimulates their thought; any copying of ideas is so easily detected and makes the paper so weak that I have only once known it done.

The answers to questions should be handed in two days before the lesson in order that the teacher may have time to correct, compare and mark them. This method enables him to know before speaking on any topic just what each pupil thinks about it, so that he can ask him to elaborate or exemplify his views, can contrast the differing opinions in the class, and can show their strength or weakness.

Discussion in class is apt to be so animated that it has to be guided in order to keep it from wandering from the sub-

ject in hand. The summaries and definitions which are to be written down by the class when any important point is brought out in each lesson, will serve to draw the wanderers back to the central issue.

The teacher of ethics ought always to work with a blackboard at hand. On this should be written the varying opinions of the pupils as they are brought out in class, so that these opinions can be compared and their strong and weak points made evident. On it one can draw diagrams to illustrate graphically the more important points, and on it should be written definitions and sentences of compressed suggestiveness which are to be copied and memorised.

A number of examination papers have been added to the set of questions; by the answers to these examinations I test the success of my teaching. Satisfactorily to answer these examinations the student must have understood his notes and have followed the development of the course. An examination should be given at least once in two months, and each pupil should prepare for it by a review of his notes and written papers. In marking the weekly questions I estimate the vigour, originality and thoroughness of the discussion, not the fact that the pupil's opinion agrees or does not agree with mine. As the examinations are reviews, I mark them high when the student has understood and mastered what he has been taught and can defend his own opinion about it.

I find that almost all the students desire to preserve their questions, notes and compositions. To do this in the most satisfactory way, punched thesis paper should be used, and the questions on each subject should precede the answers, and be followed by notes given in class by the teacher. The whole can then be put into a cover and will stand for the pupil's own book on ethics.

Many of the sets of questions are headed by a reference to passages in literature which furnish suggestion and stimulus rather than a direct answer to any question. These references aim to give the pupil a taste of nourishing thinking and to whet his appetite for more.

If any class in a school is reading Shakspere or is familiar with such writers as George Eliot, Browning or Lowell, new and helpful illustrations of ethical principles can be drawn from these sources. As a further means of keeping the study in close touch with life the teacher should aim to show that great men like Socrates, Darwin, Lincoln, and Parkman have lived out the principles that he and his pupils struggle to discuss.

In case the class or teacher is unable to give the time to writing and correcting written work, it is possible to use these same questions without written preparation, but the opinions will be far more crude and the gain proportionally much less. In some cases the answers can take the place of English composition and will be found especially valuable as a test of power, because forensic writing is more difficult as well as more important than the making of abstracts or descriptions. In my own teaching I have given 40 or 60 minutes to each exercise. If a shorter time is all that can be had, some of the questions can be omitted or the topic subdivided.

I should be glad to answer any further questions as to the methods of teaching, and to receive any suggestions from the experience of those who use this book.

190 Marlborough Street, Boston, Mass.

## SUBJECT I

## THE MEANING OF ETHICS

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Give an example of a question of right and wrong.

2. Does it require any goodness to play football well? Can a boy play football hard and persistently without gaining any virtues?

3. "Mary is such a satisfactory child. She sits quiet for hours and always does exactly what she is told without asking why." Does such a person seem to you good? Why or why not?

4. What qualities does anyone need in order to lead an orchestra, or to succeed in politics?

5. Henry is trying to decide whether he ought to go to college or not. He is talented but poor, his father has died and his mother is not strong. What ought he to consider before deciding? Why?

6. It is a wet day and I wake up with a sore throat. My mother and father are away from home. I wonder whether I ought to go to school. What attitude of mind do I need in order to make a right decision?

7. Is one more apt to be virtuous when he is doing what he likes or when he is doing what he dislikes? Give an example.

### NOTES

The main points to be brought out in this first chapter are:

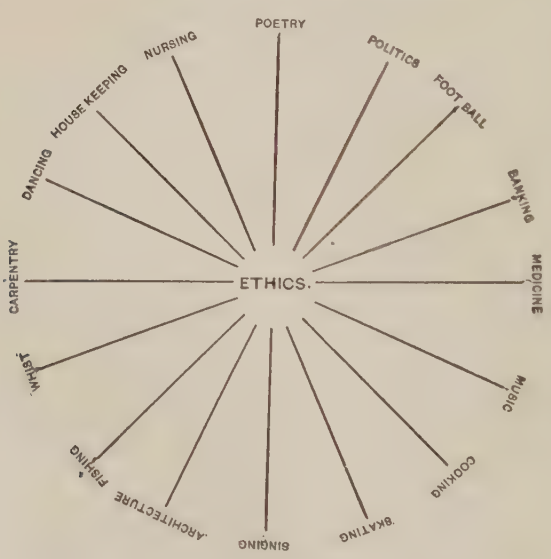
1. The live and appealing character of ethics, which springs from the fact that already we all are engrossed in

moral questions. This can be illustrated by the answers to question 1.

2. That in studying ethics we think carefully and thoroughly about what to do and how to do it.

3. That the laws of ethics apply to everyone who is trying to accomplish anything whatsoever. This is illustrated by question 2.

4. That there is a right and wrong about *every* subject. This is illustrated by the diagram of the centralness of ethics which should be drawn on the blackboard.




5. That goodness means active loyalty to our interests and that no one can be successful without having moral qualities. This is to be brought out by questions 3, 4, and 7.

6. That ethics can help us to think straight, sympathetically and thoroughly. This is brought out by questions 5 and 6.

Make the class, one by one, name the moral qualities that

are needed to play football or to learn to play the violin well. Write these lists on the blackboard and show how the *same* virtues are needed in very different pursuits.

Ask the members of the class to notice before the next lesson how often they hear the words, "right," "wrong," "ought," "good," "wicked," used.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

1. A man sets out to be a scientist and explorer; show that his choice of a hot or cold climate, of hunting or navigation, of anthropology or ethnology must depend on his fitness and the opportunity.

2. A girl wants to become a musician. Her choice between violin, 'cello, singing, or piano is determined by her own capacities and by the opportunities and needs about her.

3. A woman wishes to make it her life work to help the poor. She must know the best and most fruitful sphere of helpfulness and her own talent (for example her love of children, her efficiency in running clubs.)

4. Take examples from your own experience or that of the class to show how any work eagerly followed leads to virtue. Show the moral qualities needed in nursing or in guiding an electric car through crowded streets.

5. To show the value of the study of ethics in relation to living, which involves constant moral decisions, compare the need of studying ethics with the need of examining an automobile before you buy it, or seeing whether a sample of cloth will wash before making up a dress.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Ethics is the study of right choosing and well doing, of how to do the right thing in the right way.

Everyone who acts consciously is concerned with ethics, and therefore it is of interest to everyone.

In any moral choice we need to consider (*a*) our opportunity and (*b*) our fitness.

To carry out any plan we need (*a*) instruction or the observation of others, and (*b*) practice.

Success in anything whatsoever depends on our having or acquiring virtues. To be good is to be absolutely loyal to the interest that is most yourself.

Ethics helps us:—

(*a*) To think straight and not deceive ourselves.

(*b*) To think clearly and not lose our heads.

(*c*) To think sympathetically on many sides of a question.

## SUBJECT II

## THE MORAL AND THE INVOLUNTARY

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Prof. Huxley says (Lay Sermons, p. 340): "I protest that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer and should be a better and happier man." Why should you not want to be so made?

2. A sleepwalker gets up one night and going downstairs with a candle sets the lace curtains on fire and the house burns down. Is she in any way responsible?

3. A poor woman has fallen on the slippery sidewalk. I see that she has hurt herself badly and needs to go at once to the hospital. My friend's carriage is at the door ready to take her for a pleasure drive. I lift the injured woman into it and drive to the hospital. Am I responsible for taking the carriage? Am I blameworthy? What is the difference between being responsible and being blameworthy?

4. When Maggie Tulliver (in "The Mill on the Floss") forgot about feeding her brother Tom's rabbits and they starved, was she morally responsible or not?

5. A girl who cares intensely for music sits down to practise "Lohengrin" for an hour. She becomes so absorbed in it that she forgets everything else and when bedtime comes her lessons are unlearned. Is she to blame or not? If you were her school teacher, what questions should you ask her in order to find out whether she could have helped it?

6. A violent-tempered woman lets a cruel taunt escape her in a sudden fit of overpowering anger. Can you be sure that she is responsible? On what facts would it depend?

7. A government official is sent to the Yosemite with a large sum of money in his charge. As the coach rounds a corner two highwaymen spring out and shout: "Hands up!" Up go the official's hands automatically and while one bandit covers him with a pistol the other proceeds to rob him. What further facts would you need in order to decide whether he could have controlled his acts?

8. Read "Romeo and Juliet," Act V, Scene 1, and say whether you think the apothecary was responsible for selling the poison. "My poverty but not my will consents," he said. Are we responsible for what we do against our wills?

9. A boy is firing off cannon crackers on the Fourth of July, and having found that a small cracker when exploded under a tin can makes a magnificent noise, he tries it with a large cracker and the result is a bad injury to his sister. Is the boy responsible?

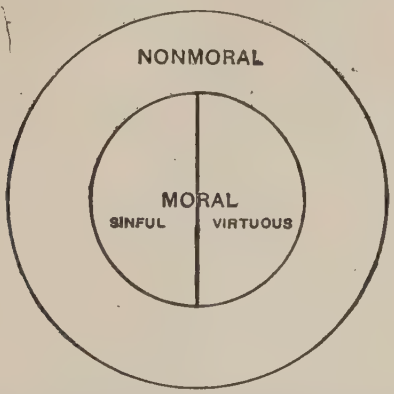
## NOTES

The principal point on which to insist in this chapter is the distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts, for ethics is concerned only with acts which are chosen. This distinction is clearly implied in questions 1 and 2, but it is necessary to make sure that it is held to throughout every answer. There will be a tendency among the students to decide whether a person is *guilty* rather than whether he is responsible, and they must be made to see that an act may be harmful without being in the least sinful (Question 2), and also that a person may be responsible and at the same time *right* in his act (Question 3). This boundary between responsible and non-responsible acts is graphically marked out by the diagrams on page 357.

Many acts lie near the border line between the voluntary and the involuntary. Forgetfulness, sudden anger, fear, may cause involuntary acts. Such cases are given in questions 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Our responsibility in such cases is to guard against any harm we are likely to do when we become irresponsible.

That we are responsible for any chosen act, whether or not it is repugnant to us, is implied in question 8.




Any act if moral (i. e. either right or wrong), falls within the inner circle. Professor Huxley's choice of an automatic life wipes out moral life. Illustrate on the blackboard by erasing the inner circle.

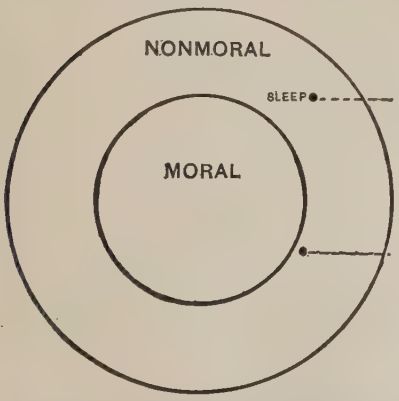



Diagram to illustrate the difficulty of judging acts close to borderline between the voluntary and the involuntary.

Question 9 will give an opportunity to show that we are responsible for the results of our ignorance whenever we are

at all aware of the danger of such ignorance, and have any power to overcome it.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

(*a*) *Of non-moral conduct.*

1. A baby who keeps its tired mother awake all night by fretting is neither good nor bad.

2. If an apothecary wrongly marks a box of powders and the nurse, following the directions, gives an overdose of medicine, she is not responsible no matter what are the results.

(*b*) *Of the need of preparation for becoming non-responsible.*

1. If a boy knows that certain comrades irritate him so that he loses his temper, the facing of this fact before he meets them will keep him from discussion or lead him to avoid their society.

2. A girl is easily absorbed in novel reading. If she has charge of a child she must put the child in absolute safety before beginning to read.

3. Was King Alfred responsible for letting the cakes burn?

4. A man who has been in violent mobs knows that he is apt to be carried away by the feeling of the crowd and to do things which he greatly regrets. He is responsible for letting himself join any mob.

5. A girl promises not to tell of her friend's engagement, but forgets and reveals it. Is she morally responsible?

(*c*) *Of the relation of habit to involuntary action.*

Use illustrations from the chapter on Habit in Professor William James's "Psychology."

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

If we were made to act the right mechanically, we should not be ourselves, for it is moral life that makes us ourselves and moral life is the life of choice.

Before judging whether any act is praiseworthy or blameworthy, we need to know whether it was involuntary.

No unconscious or involuntary acts are either virtuous or sinful. We are, however, responsible for preparing to become irresponsible, and we are responsible whenever we have a moment's glimpse of a better or worse choice. We are responsible when we act against our better judgment, but not when physically or mentally powerless.

The difficulty, in many cases, of judging whether anyone is responsible or not should teach us to be charitable.

## SUBJECT III

## THE POWER OF A PURPOSE

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. "I wish something would turn up so that I might go to New York to hear the opera," said the first man. "I have decided to go to New York to hear the opera," said the second. In what ways does the first man's state of mind differ from that of the second man?

2. If you have set your heart on owning a watch which costs fifty dollars and have no way of borrowing the money, what will such a purpose make you do and what will it prevent you from doing?

3. Do you know anyone who has no purpose in life? If so, describe one day in the life of such a person and the difference between such a day and that of anyone who has a definite aim.

4. If you have to decide whether to spend a winter in Europe or to stay at home and take a year's study in college, what should you consider in order to make up your mind?

5. Read Tennyson's poem, "The Lotus Eaters." Do the sailors here described seem to you to be morally responsible? Why or why not?

6. "School is over, all my work is done and my family do not need me. Is it either right or wrong for me to loaf all the morning?"

7. Read Spencer's "Data of Ethics," Chap. 1, Sec. 2. Do you agree with Spencer that there are some chosen acts with which morality is not concerned? If so, give an example of one.

8. (*a*) If a scientific man tried to invent and build a perfect bird's nest, would he at first succeed better or worse

than the birds do? Would he succeed better or worse after a trial of five years and why?

(*b*) Give two examples of work done by men of which animals are incapable.

## NOTES

In the last chapter we showed that where anyone acts involuntarily, or in unavoidable ignorance, he is not responsible. In this chapter we want to show that the key of moral life is purpose and to make it very clear what a purpose is and does.

To show what a purpose *is* we distinguish it from a fact, a wish, a vague idea, or an instinct, and by this analysis prove that it includes thought, will and foresight. (Question 1.)

To show what a purpose *does,* we use the illustration of making up your mind, of the effort to earn money or to learn swimming. (Question 2.)

Through the illustration of the Lotus eaters we show that it is only when one has a purpose that any act becomes right or wrong for him. We must make it clear that many people have purposes of which they are only dimly aware. (Questions 3, 5 and 6.)

Next we need to explain that though ethics is concerned with all conscious acts, we ought to spend much thought only on what nearly or deeply concerns our purpose. (Question 7.)

Finally we must bring out the organic relation between purpose and progress. (Question 8.)

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

1. "Surely it was because you did not know how late it was that you sat up." "No, I did it on purpose."

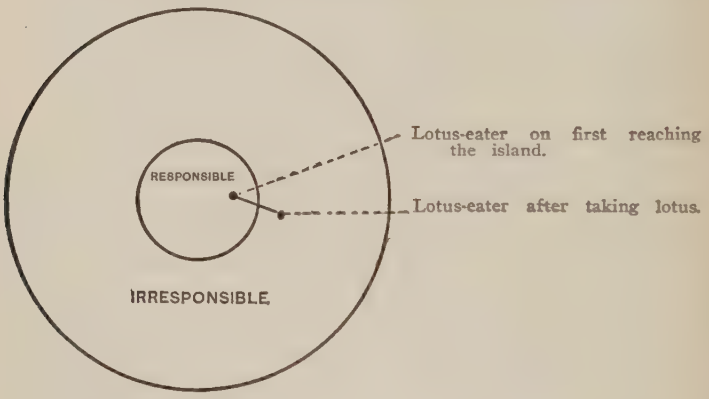
This answer does not tell us whether the child was right or wrong, but it does tell us that he was responsible.

2. If a boy agrees to play football, it becomes wrong for

him to stop in the middle of the game because he is being defeated, or because he suddenly wishes to play marbles.

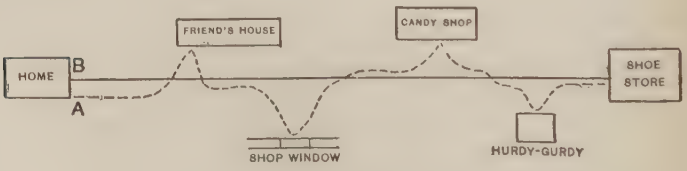
I.

Show by the diagram how the Lotus eaters have drifted out of the sphere of moral distinctions into the wider and less human area of the non-moral.




II.

Show by the diagram how the dotted path of the purposeless A differs from the straight path of B, who goes to buy shoes.




SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

To enter moral life we must have some purpose, great or small. Without any aim we are neither good nor sinful.

As soon as we have any purpose some acts become wrong and others right for us.

Morality is concerned with all conscious acts, for whenever an act is chosen we are responsible for it.

Moral life is the life in which we carry out our purposes; this requires foresight, sympathy, and will.

No decision can rightly be made without a knowledge of our deepest interest and purpose.

It is immoral to think long on unimportant or briefly on important subjects; "important" means closely related to our purpose.

## SUBJECT IV

## GOODNESS AND BADNESS

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

Read A. P. Peabody's "Moral Philosophy," pp. 28 to 31.

1. If you were showing an automobile to someone who had never seen one before and he asked, "What is the difference between a good and a bad automobile?" what should you answer? What is the difference between a good poem and a bad poem, a good horse and a bad horse? Is there any characteristic common to all good things?

2. "Oh, what a bad day!" exclaims the tennis player as he sees the rain. "What an excellent day for my crops," exclaims the farmer. What is it that makes these two people think of the same event as good and as bad?

3. Why is it not a good use of a volume of Shakspere to kindle a fire with its pages?

4. Give an example of anything that is absolutely good for nothing and always will be.

5. St. Gaudens, the sculptor, excels in making statues, Delmonico's French cook excels in making pastry. If each one of them was forced to do the other's work instead of his own, do you think it would be good or bad for the character of each? Why?

6. In Italy one often sees women harnessed to carts and serving the purpose of horses. If it does not injure their health, have we any reason to feel that such a use of women is bad? Why or why not?

7. "Don't wear your best suit so often, you will wear it out." "If you do not use your mind at all you soon will not have any left." What differences between the nature of things and of human beings do these remarks suggest?

8. It is frequently said that the negroes before the war were happier than they are now. If this is so, is their freedom a misfortune or a gain, and why?

## NOTES

The object of this chapter is (*a*) to bring out the likeness and the difference between the goodness of things and the goodness of man, and (*b*) to show that the good life is simply the richest and most characteristic life that each one of us can live. The good life for each person differs because each person is different, but goodness in every case means fitness for the purpose in mind. This is brought out in questions 1, 2, and 3.

Questions 3 and 5 show that though things or people may be used for many purposes, the best purpose is that for which they are meant.

Question 4 brings out the point that the varied possibilities of goodness in anything forbid our being sure that any object is useless.

Question 7 shows that while things wear out with use, man's mind and character strengthen.

Questions 6 and 8 are meant to show that while things serve the ends of others, man should serve his own ends.

For additional illustrations and suggestions read the chapter on "Goodness" in George H. Palmer's "Nature of Goodness."

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Things are good when they are fitted for the purpose for which they were meant.

If we do not know the purpose of anything, we cannot tell whether it is good or bad.

If a thing has no purpose, it is neither good nor bad, except as it interferes with other purposes. It is characteristic

of man to find purposes for what before was considered useless.

The good man is he who is pre-eminently human, that is, who is fitted for the purpose of manhood.

Things serve the purpose of man, and man serves his own purpose.

Things wear out with use, but character grows stronger.

## SUBJECT V

## RIGHT AND WRONG JUDGMENTS

Read "Ethical Religion," by Wm. Salter, pp. 94-101.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. A highly educated Chinese mandarin, who taught at Harvard College some years ago, aroused much indignation among Cambridge people because he tied up and pressed his infant daughter's feet so that they should not grow. Was he cruel?

2. Is laziness ever right? Is cowardice ever right? "That soldier turned and ran during the battle of Gettysburg. Wasn't he a coward?" "See that woman! She has sat with her arms folded all day. How lazy she is!" Are these fair judgments, and why?

3. Kindness is always a virtue. "My mother is the kindest person in the world. She gives me everything I ask." Why is this false reasoning?

4. A child of ten is given three dollars and is told that this must supply all her wants for a month. Her shoes are worn out and she at first means to spend the money on a new pair, but she sees in a shop window a large and beautiful purple vase and in an instant changes her mind and buys the vase. Was this a bad plan? Would it always be wrong for anyone who had no good shoes to spend money on beautiful things?

5. Why was Esau's act in giving up his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage a wrong one?

6. If Hamlet fully decided that he ought to avenge his father by killing Claudius, was it good or sinful of him to delay so long before he did it?

7. Nansen left his wife to earn her living and spent the best years of his life in the almost hopeless search for the North Pole. How can we judge whether he was sinful or virtuous in doing this?

8. Francis Parkman, who wrote many volumes of American history, suffered most of his life from severe neuralgia and weak eyes. What qualities did it require for him to carry out his purpose of writing history?

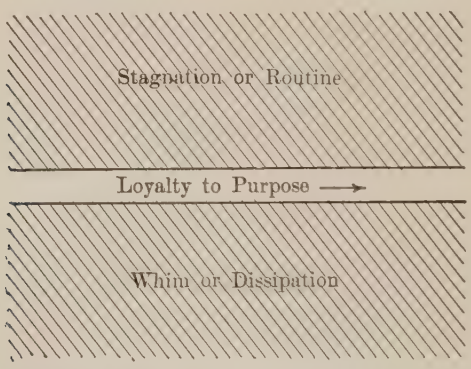



Diagram showing the narrow path of right action between stagnation and dissipation.

## NOTES

Now that we have defined goodness as fitness for your own purpose, and advance in virtue as the process of so fitting yourself, we are ready to learn how to make fair judgments of character. The central points accented in this chapter are:

1. That we can never judge from the outside. The apparently brutal or lazy act may be done with excellent motives and vice-versa. This is brought out by Questions 1, 2, and 3.

2. To judge any act as virtuous or sinful we must know the purpose back of it. This is brought out especially in Question 6.

3. It follows that we can surely judge only ourselves and those whose purposes we know as well as our own. This is brought out in Question 7.

4. It is always wrong not to hold loyally to a chosen purpose until something better is seen. This is brought out in Questions 4, 5, and 6.

5. Loyalty to any purpose requires memory, imagination, courage, perseverance. This is brought out in Question 8.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

To judge any act as sinful or virtuous, we must know the purpose behind it. We can truly judge only ourselves and those whose purposes we know.

An act is bad when its consequences are disastrous.

An act is sinful when the doer knows it to be wrong.

An act may be harmful without being sinful.

An act may be sinful without being harmful.

A purpose is good when it is carefully chosen as the best we can see, and loyally followed until we see something better.

To be virtuous is to be open-minded, considerate and resolute in the choice and execution of that purpose for which you believe yourself to be most fitted.

"The man who knows himself, understands his own powers, and pursues his purpose steadily, is the man of success." (Francis Parkman.)

## SUBJECT VI

## THE DARKNESS OF WRONG-DOING

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. I am travelling from New Hampshire to Boston with a large number of bundles and am delighted to secure an extra seat on which to deposit them. Gradually the car fills up and all who pass by look wistfully at my seat. If I continue to keep my parcels on it, by what arguments can I deceive myself into maintaining that this is right?

2. If you have a strong temptation to avoid going to the dentist's, how can you best force yourself to go? If you are discouraged about playing golf how can you best help yourself to fresh endeavour?

3. What are the principal differences between an *excuse* for tardiness at school and a valid reason for tardiness at school?

4. If you knew someone of whom you were very fond, but who cheated in examinations, what would you say to him to make him really prefer not to cheat? What probably makes him do it?

5. Susan has an impulsive, adventurous, careless nature, easily aroused to enthusiasm which as easily dies out. Jennie is slow, timid, and indifferent, but gentle, docile, and persistent. What faults is each likely to have, and which character gives more promise of improvement? How will Susan be tempted to sin and how will Jennie? How can each strengthen her better self?

6. In her early days Helen Keller, when thwarted in any way, showed a furious temper which largely disappeared when she learned to understand hand-signs and to read. In this case what became of her temper?

7. If a girl has done something she is heartily ashamed of, is it better for her to confess it or conceal it? Why?

8. Read Robert Louis Stevenson's essay, "Old Mortality" (Memories and Portraits, p. 50-56, author's edition, Scribner, 1887). Was the life of Stevenson's friend a successful one? Was it a good or a bad life?

9. Is there any case in which cowardice or laziness will help anyone to carry out his purpose? Why, or why not?

## NOTES

The points to be brought out in this chapter are:

1. That sin always involves self-deception and conversely that conquest over sin means the effort to face clearly our widest outlook. This is illustrated by Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

2. That sin is always short-sighted. This is illustrated by Questions 4 and 9.

3. That sin means power turned in the wrong direction. This is illustrated by Questions 5 and 6.

4. That when any such power is turned in the right direction we are redeemed. This is illustrated by Questions 7 and 8.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Compare the power of wrong-doing,—a power which defeats our own deepest purposes, with steam that explodes the boiler instead of making the train go forward. Use the same illustration to show that even in a lazy person there is a little steam which through his laziness leaks out, instead of bearing him ahead.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

All sin is unfaithfulness to one's aim.

Self-deceit, selfishness, jealousy, cowardice, laziness, injure every purpose and therefore are always wrong.

The wrong-doer hides under the cover of self-deceit and sophistry, for he dreads the light of truth.

When tempted to do wrong, turn your attention fully and sympathetically on what you are inclined to shove out of sight.

Sin is power turned in the wrong direction. It is wilful disloyalty to the best you know.

Where there is power there is hope, for by turning that power in the right direction the wrong-doer can redeem himself.

## SUBJECT VII

## THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Imagine that you are just elected President of the United States, and want to settle conscientiously the question whether to give the Filipinos an independent government or not. How should you go to work to make a conscientious decision?

2. Read Plato's "Crito." If Socrates knew that he was innocent and falsely condemned, that he could do great good by living, and that his children needed him, was he right or wrong in refusing to escape from prison, and why?

3. When the Civil War broke out, General Robert Lee thought it his duty to be loyal to his State, Virginia; General Thomas, also a Virginian, thought it his duty to be loyal to the nation. Each followed his conscience. Could both be right, and if so, why?

4. Ruskin says in the preface to "Sesame and Lilies" that every girl ought to spend part of each day in making clothes for the poor, and adds: "Even if you should be deceived and give them to the dishonest, and hear of their being taken at once to the pawnbroker's, never mind, for the pawnbroker must sell them to someone else who has need of them. That is no concern of yours. What concerns you is only that when you see a half-naked child, you should have good and fresh clothes to give it." Why is this plan of Ruskin's not a thoroughly conscientious one?

5. New Englanders are often told that they are too conscientious. If conscience is our guiding light, can we have too much of it? What does over-conscientiousness mean?

6. When ought conscience to be active in our lives? What would be the result of having conscience steadily active?

7. Are there any cases when conscience is in doubt? Try to think of a case.

8. Think over your answers to the questions above and say what you mean by conscience. Is it always right? Can it be changed by education?

## NOTES

The aim of this chapter is so to re-define conscience that it shall not be thought of as a mysterious or separate faculty, but as the person himself when he is fully alive and thinking about conduct. As the wrong-doer deliberately turns to the dark, so the conscientious person when in doubt seeks the strongest light. This is brought out in Question 1.

Conscience is the thorough use of thought, of sympathy, and of resolution to get at all the facts we need. This is implied in Questions 2 and 4.

Two people may make opposite decisions under similar circumstances and yet both be morally right, that is, wholly conscientious. In these cases we need to distinguish the use of right as *correct* from its use as *conscientious*. This is brought out in Question 3.

We may wholly desire to do our best, that is, to act conscientiously, and yet doubt what is the right act either (*a*) because we cannot get at the facts of the case, or (*b*) because we do not clearly know our own aim. This should be brought out in the consideration of the answers to Question 7.

If conscientiousness is the timely and sensible will to know what is right, we cannot have too much. We need not less but more in order to be thoroughly successful. This answers Questions 5 and 8.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

An example of a thoroughly unconscientious act is found in George Eliot's "Middlemarch."[1]

[1] Vol. i. p. 290 ff., Handy Volume Edition. Estes and Lauriat.

Notice how Bulstrode avoids thinking and deceives himself, drifting rather than advancing into acts that lead to Raffles's death.

Contrast with this the act of Shakspere's Brutus in murdering Cæsar; show the effort of Brutus to get light, his deep anxiety, his sleepless nights, and finally, his unwavering conviction.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Any conscientious decision takes thought, sympathy and resolution to get at all the facts.

To make a conscientious decision, we must know our central purpose and the facts of the case.

Conscience is the constant will to know what is right, and to do it.

We cannot be too conscientious, but we can be over-scrupulous. Over-scrupulous people think too long about trifles and decisions already made, or they think of themselves when they ought to think of what they are doing.

## SUBJECT VIII

## CONSCIENCE, CUSTOM, AND LAW

Read Palmer's "Field of Ethics," pp. 44-49 and 56-65.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Describe the conscientious way of practising a hard piece of music and compare it with the unconscientious way. What are the principal differences between conscientious and unconscientious acts?

2. Is being conscientious the same as meaning well, or as doing as you are told? If not, why not?

3. Many people who know the law of the land take goods through the Custom House without declaring them. Can this be conscientiously done?

4. Before the Emancipation Proclamation many slaves escaped to the North. Was it right or wrong for a citizen of Boston to break the law and hide a fugitive slave in his house, or ought he to have returned the slave to his master? Why?

5. An officer is sent out to arrest a thief. As the thief sees his pursuer coming, he darts down a side street and across a frozen river. Just as he is landing on the opposite bank, he hears a crash in the ice and realises that the officer has fallen through. Turning back at once the thief dives in, and, at the risk of his life, pulls the officer out. Ought the officer then to arrest the thief or to let him go?

6. On what principle do you decide in all these cases when it is right to obey the law and when to disobey it? What is the value of having laws? Do they make people freer or more constrained?

7. If it is the custom in New York to play cards for

money, does that make it any more right to do it? If it is the custom to have very late hours at parties, is it right to follow the custom? When ought we to follow and when to disregard custom? Give an example.

8. Can we always tell whether we have been sinful by the feeling of shame?

## NOTES

In this chapter I have aimed to bring out the relation of conscience to law (which roughly embodies the average morality of the past) and to customs, which differ from laws in being vaguer and unenforced by prescribed penalties.

Both laws and customs, in so far as they touch moral issues, hold us by their influence to an average standard and tend to prevent our falling below or rising far above this standard.

Our relation to the laws of our country is more definite and important than the relation we have to the customs of our set, because by accepting the benefits of citizenship we have implicitly agreed to obey the state and national laws. This should be brought out in answer to Questions 3, 5 and 6.

Customs are much more flexible than laws and we ourselves can help to break up bad and to make better customs. This should be accented in the answers to Question 7.

In a self-governing country, laws should be changed rather than broken, and when any law is conscientiously broken it should be done without evasion of our responsibility. This is brought out by questions 3 and 4.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Discuss any laws and customs that are specially applicable to your class.

Play that is against the rules in football is often justified

on the ground that it is customary and right if the umpire does not find it out.

The shooting of deer out of season, the illegal speed of automobile driving, the smuggling of liquor into a Prohibition town are common examples of the breaking of laws for private ends.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Law is the average morality of the past, embodied in statutes. It protects and frees us so that we can pursue our individual ends.

As citizens we implicitly agree to keep the laws of our state and nation.

When we break any live law we weaken our government. We ought not, therefore, to break any law that can by reasonable means be altered.

We should break no law without trying to realise the value of laws and without considering all sides of the case.

Custom is a social habit and holds many of us up to the average standard of morality.

True loyalty to the good in custom should make us ready to break any bad custom whenever we can help to form a better one.

## SUBJECT IX

## INTERESTS AS LIFE GIVERS AND LIFE SAVERS

Read William James: "Talks to Teachers," pp. 91-99.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. If several people are looking out of the same car window at once, do they see the same things or different things? Imagine any three people and say what each would see.

2. If a stranger asked you to give him an idea of one of the men whom you know well, what should you think it important to tell?

3. Is it positively a duty to have interests? Can a person who is without any interests be good? Can we be interested in such a person?

4. Before the Civil War broke out, Grant, who was then a man of 37, was a miserable failure, whose family was ashamed of him. Four years later he was one of the most famous and powerful men in the United States. What does it seem to you made this change in Grant? Give any example you know in which an interest has helped a person?

5. Is there anything in the world that is absolutely uninteresting? Give an example.

6. (*a*) Is it better for a man's character to have a strong interest in football or a moderate interest in study, and why?

(*b*) What faults are cured by any keen interest?

7. Why is an interest in collecting postage stamps not likely to be a permanent one? If we made a complete collection could we continue to be interested?

8. Does hard work increase or lessen any interest? Give an example.

## NOTES

The aim of this chapter is to bring out the central and constant relation of love, or strong interest, to personality, and therefore to the forming of personality which is known as duty.

> "Love is too young to know what conscience is,
> But who knows not conscience is born of love."

I have tried to show, that we see with our interests. (Question 1.)

2. That our interests are the characteristic part of us. (Question 2.)

3. That without germ or possibility of interest we are non-moral. (Question 3.)

4. That interest in anything, when strong and lasting, will reform character. (Questions 4 and 6.)

5. That to last interest must grow and be loyally served. (Questions 7 and 8.)

6. That anything in the world may become of interest. (Question 5.)

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Without interests there would be no moral life.

We become more ourselves as we find and express our true interests.

Interests, therefore, are life-givers and life-savers. Where there is interest there is hope.

The best receipt for becoming good is to take an interest in something and hold to it.

We get interest:

(*a*) By throwing ourselves into the interests we have.

(*b*) By connecting anything that seems dull with some object which we already want.

(*c*) By taking hard hold of any subject until it takes hold of us.

## SUBJECT X

## THE CHOICE OF INTERESTS

Read "Noble Lives and Noble Deeds," edited by Edward A. Horton, pp. 13-15 and 103-105.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Darwin devoted his life to science. Dorothea Dix devoted hers to the improvement of prisons and asylums. Which interest do you consider the nobler, and why?

2. Within a short time of his marriage Robert Shaw was asked to undertake the organisation of a negro regiment and later to lead it against Fort Wagner. This meant almost certain death. Was Shaw right to undertake a work which has left his wife and mother lonely for forty years?

3. If anyone has a great talent for mathematics ought he or she to give up the work in order to do charity work? If so, why? Are there any exceptions?

4. If you had a perfectly free choice, to what should you prefer to give most of your time, and why?

5. What ought anyone to consider when choosing his profession between different subjects which interest him?

6. A talented writer married a somewhat extravagant wife. In order to support her and his children he had to write books so rapidly that they are unworthy of him. Ought he to have remained unmarried?

7. Ought everyone to spend a large proportion of his time in doing things for others? Ought women to do this more than men, and if so, why?

8. Give a list of professions in which work is done for others and a list of those in which nothing is done for others.

## NOTES

Since interest is the source of virtue, the choice of interest is central in moral life. This chapter aims to answer the question: What interests shall we choose?

The best way to attack this question is to break down the unreal distinction between personal and impersonal interests, to show that all interests require the same open, loving devotion, and that work in science may help people fully as much in the long run as philanthropy.

This is brought out by Question 1.

We get help toward realising where our main interest lies by classifying interests roughly as of four types. The study of these types and of their relation is brought out in Questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8.

The ultimate test of what is our best work is made by finding what rouses us most and for what we are best fitted.

This is brought out by Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate that it is best that each person should do his special work, show how mistaken it would have been for Watts, the inventor of the steam engine, to make philanthropy his life work.

Show the unhappiness and inefficiency of Schiller when obliged to devote himself to surgery.

Read in Darwin's life the account of the fear of his family that he would be a disgrace to them, because of his apparently useless zeal when a young man for making collections and for shooting.

Read Henry James's "Lesson of the Master," and bring out the point that the writer in the story was wrong to have married unless he had carefully considered what he owed to art and to his wife and children. Show that we cannot judge whether his decision was right, but that we can say that he ought not to have married without trying to realise all that marriage would mean.

SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Interests may be divided into four classes:

1. Artistic.
2. Care-taking.
3. Scientific.
4. Executive.

To find your own interest:

Look round carefully and choose that which feels warmest.

If you have no strong interest, try any one that you think good, and watch the results.

Ask yourself—

1. Does it call out the best of me?
2. Does it make me like other things and people more?
3. Is it likely to be helpful?
4. Does my interest grow?

Anything we do may be done

(*a*) selfishly,

(*b*) for others,

(*c*) for its own sake.

It is not selfish to do anything for its own sake, unless we are thereby neglecting what we know is more our work.

EXAMINATION I

1. What is ethics and why is it an important study? What, so far, has been the gain to you of studying it?

2. I am asked a sudden question and a lie slips out in answer before I have any time to consider. Am I responsible for the lie? Why or why not? Does it make any difference in regard to my responsibility if the lie concerned something important? Why, or why not?

3. If a man was shipwrecked and forced to live alone on a desert island, would he have any duties? If so, why, and what would they be?

4. What do you mean by a truly good person? Give an example. Is a bad man as truly a man as is a good man?

5. Give an example of a sinful act and of a harmful act and explain the difference.

6. A man in a country town in New England feels doubtful whether he ought to play golf on Sunday afternoons. What points would he need to think of in order to make a conscientious decision?

7. Why does a strong interest develop character?

## SUBJECT XI

## SACRIFICE AND DRUDGERY

Read "Blessed be Drudgery," by Wm. Gannett, pp. 1-12.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Professor James says: "Do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty." Is this a good rule? Does doing your duty always mean doing what you dislike?

2. Sir Walter Scott's partners in business failed and involved him in their debts. In order to earn money he wrote his later novels so fast that the work became a burden to him and the novels were poor. Was this drudgery likely to be good or bad for Scott's character, and was he right to submit to it?

3. I am going up the Matterhorn. I should like to take a jug of water, a slice of beefsteak, a fur coat, a rope to attach in case of danger, a telescope, spiked boots and a photographic camera. How shall I decide which of my wants to sacrifice?

4. Father Damien left his home and country to live and die in taking care of the lepers. If he chose this work of his own accord, was it an absolute sacrifice on his part? Why, or why not?

5. What is the meaning of the words: "He that loseth his life shall find it"? Give an illustration.

6. Would it be an advantage or a disadvantage to man if all that he needed was supplied by nature, if, for example, tools grew on trees and clothes fell from the skies? Would it be an advantage from the point of view of character and of progress if everyone was obliged to work for a living?

7. Ought we to try to get rid of drudgery just as far as is possible? Does drudgery improve character?

8. Is there any good work done without sacrifice? Is there any good work which is wholly a sacrifice? Give examples.

## NOTES

Our chapters on Interest give the material from which to make a definition of duty that shall be true to life.

Duty is doing with all your might what you love and believe in. It does not mean doing what you dislike just because you dislike it, but it always means doing your utmost. It involves overcoming all slackness and cowardice, and demanding more and more of yourself, and this will always be hard work. This is brought out by Questions 1 and 6.

Doing what you really want and believe in also involves sacrifice.

(*a*) Sacrifice of comfort and of leisure to the claims of your work.

(*b*) Sacrifice of other desires which are incompatible with your work.

(*c*) Giving up the achieved and easy for the sake of advance.

These points are brought out in Questions 5 and 8.

Absolute sacrifice is always wrong, and equally so is a life without any effort. These points are brought out in Questions 4 and 6.

We ought to get rid of any drudgery that retards progress, but the doing away of drudgery does not mean a life without discipline. Question 7.

The choice of what to accept or what to give up can only be rightly made in relation to our most characteristic purpose. This is illustrated by Questions 2 and 3.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Read William B. Yeats's poem, "The Countess Cathleen," for a noble illustration of the right kind of sacrifice.

Read Phillips Brooks's sermon, "The Symbol and the Reality."

Discuss the question whether the automatic machine-work of saw-mills and factories has on the whole decreased man's labour or only redirected it.

A country-lover finds that she is much tired by having to go into town every day for her work in a milliner's store. The question arises what to sacrifice, the joy of the country or the advantages of her work in the city. How shall she decide, and why?

Is it wise for every one of us to be fitted to do all the common necessary tasks, such as cooking, carpentry, plumbing, or is it better that talented people should be free from such drudgery?

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Duty is not doing hard things just because they are hard, but doing your work with vigor because you believe in it.

Any growing person must make sacrifices, but always for the sake of what he wants more than that which he sacrifices.

The choice of what to keep and what to give up should always be made by considering our deepest purpose.

## SUBJECT XII

## SELFISHNESS

Read John Caird's "Philosophy of Religion," pp. 276-280.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. "That little boy gives all his pennies to poor children. How generous he is!" Is this an accurate judgment? In what does the generosity of an act consist?

2. Lincoln was driving one day when he passed a pig struggling helplessly in a ditch. After a few minutes he turned back and pulled the pig out of the ditch. On being praised for his act, he replied that he did it on his own account, as he kept getting more and more uncomfortable as he thought of the pig in distress. Was Lincoln selfish or unselfish in this act, and why?

3. If I love my father more than myself, is it selfish or unselfish on my part to give up my pleasure to his?

4. Andrew Carnegie has given $20,000 to Tuskegee. What other facts should we need in order to decide whether this was an unselfish action?

5. A miser and a public-spirited citizen are asked to subscribe to a park which will benefit the poor of a city. If each subscribes the same amount, which will exercise more unselfishness in this act, and why?

6. Can we be selfish toward ourselves?

7. A rich man buys the last loaf of bread in the only baker's shop of a small village. In the shop at the same time is a starving woman with only five cents; she asks for bread. The rich man sees, but does not notice her. Is he then selfish? What do we need to consider?

8. Is it selfish to spend large sums of money in giving entertainments when people in our own community are starving? If not, why not?

## NOTES

Familiar as is the word selfish, the effort to define it and to test what acts are selfish or unselfish soon shows how inadequate is our knowledge of its meaning. My classes find the set of questions on selfishness harder than any other set.

We need, therefore, first to make it clear that though any voluntary act is an expression of *oneself*, it is not thereby selfish. Indeed no act can be either selfish or unselfish unless it is voluntary. This is brought out in Question 1.

But though everyone acts for what on the whole he most wants, the width of outlook in different people varies enormously. The person of an unselfish character is the person of wide sympathies. This is brought out in Question 2.

My self, in the truest sense, consists of all that I love, or as we sometimes say, of all with which I am identified. But if all that I love becomes thereby identified with myself, the consideration either of selfishness or of unselfishness is transcended when we truly love. This is brought out in Question 3.

In Question 4 it is made clear that it is not the act, but the object of the act, that makes it unselfish.

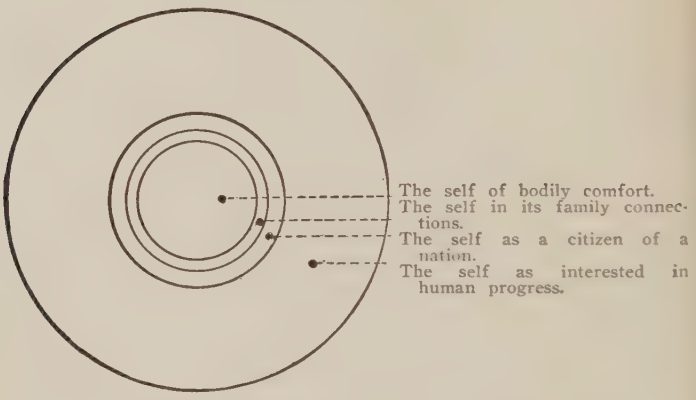
Further, we must notice that the same act may require great unselfishness in one person and none at all in another. This is shown in Question 5.

Selfishness, then, consists in being narrower, or blinder, in our personal relations than we are capable of being, and in this sense we can act selfishly toward ourselves. (Question 4.)

It is impossible to judge from the outside whether an act is selfish or unselfish, but the criterion is always the same—Are we acting up to the best we know? Are we trying to

be open-minded? This is to be brought out in Questions 7 and 8.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS


The self of bodily comfort.
The self in its family connections.
The self as a citizen of a nation.
The self as interested in human progress.

This diagram is intended to show:-

(*a*) That the size of the self differs indefinitely in different persons, so that while a few persons are identified with bodily comfort, others are identified with world-wide movements for progress, which include the bodily, family and national interests of all. The former self is narrow and selfish; the latter wide and unselfish.

(*b*) That in an unselfish act one presses beyond a narrow circle into a wider one. When the glutton gives up part of his dinner to a hungry friend, he may widen himself by doing what for him is a broadening and so an unselfish act.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Every moral act is an act of selfhood, but the size of the self differs. (Compare Clara Barton and any glutton.) We are whatever we care for, or are identified with.

The division between self and others is wiped out by love.

Selfishness is acting from a sympathy narrower than the best we are capable of.

A selfish act is partial, an unselfish act is impartial.

A selfish act is private-spirited, an unselfish act is public-spirited.

A selfish act is prejudiced, an unselfish act is open-minded.

## SUBJECT XIII

### SYMPATHY

Read Royce, "Religious Aspects of Philosophy," pp. 149-156.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Why does Professor Royce say that all selfishness comes from an illusion? Give an illustration of what he means.

2. Is it possible for a person to be intelligent and at the same time to be unsympathetic toward every subject? Does keen sympathy help or hurt the person to whom one gives it? Give an example.

3. Two sympathetic sisters, who were travelling together, used to dispute as to which should have the best room at the hotel. Each wanted the other to have it, and in their ardent disputes both became much fatigued and neither was satisfied. Was this true unselfishness? What would have been the best thing to do?

4. A girl of twenty has two invalid brothers and an old father. She has a strong taste for music and wants to go to concerts and to practise the violin four hours a day. Her family call her unsympathetic for so doing, and want her to stay with them, and amuse them all the time. What ought she to do?

5. In a rehearsal of a vocal quartette the conductor said to the soprano, "You are not singing loud enough." "Oh, I am singing softly on purpose," she answered. "Miss Brown, the alto, needs musical engagements very badly and I want her voice to be heard over mine so that people will think she has a good strong voice and ask her to sing." Was the soprano right or wrong, and why?

6. Why is it right to do more for our family and friends than we do for strangers? Is it right to care more when Americans are hurt in an accident than when Germans are? Why?

7. Lady Macbeth said that she could not kill Duncan because "he resembled her father as he slept." Did this show sympathy on her part? How could she have overcome her desire to have Macbeth kill the king?

8. A rich boy, who has always been indulged, grows up with very narrow sympathies. In what ways can his sympathies best be widened?

## NOTES

The central idea of this chapter is that as without sympathy we are inhuman, so also in proportion to the width and loyalty of our sympathy we become more of a person. This is brought out in Question 2.

Sympathy, like interest, grows by thorough and intimate knowledge. At the time when we fully comprehend and realise the real life of any person or any subject we cannot treat it coldly or selfishly. Selfishness, therefore, is an illusion, for it means that we are not seeing things as they really are. This is suggested in Question 1.

The definition of sympathy, as the power to realise the live truth about anything, shows us that any weakening subservience to others is not truly an expression of sympathy. This is brought out in Questions 3 and 4.

In all the best relations of life we work not so much for each other as for an end which includes us all, but which is far greater than any of us. This is brought out in Question 5.

Since sympathy is the well-spring of life, it becomes all-important to know how we can best acquire and increase it. First we must realise that for each of us there are special springs of sympathy which rise easily and flow quickly and these it is our special province to use and increase. This is brought out in Question 6.

When we turn our full attention on any subject about which we already feel a glimmer of sympathy, our sympathy will increase and extend. This is brought out in Questions 7 and 8.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

The strength, width, and loyalty of your sympathy show how much of a person you are.

Whenever we are unsympathetic we are under an illusion.

Sympathy means the vivid consideration, not only of people, but of the whole situation, and should include firmness and common sense.

Anyone who is truly sympathetic will try not to be legs and arms to another, but to put him on his feet.

We can gain sympathy by throwing ourselves heartily into all we do and by trying to realise the lives of all whom we meet.

We must learn to see ourselves as others see us, and to see others as they see themselves.

True sympathy makes people show their best and grow to be their best selves.

## SUBJECT XIV

## THE VALUE OF IMAGINATION

Read Wm. James's "Talks to Teachers," pp. 229-234.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Do men need imagination (*a*) in business, (*b*) in politics, (*c*) in sight-seeing? Give an example of each. Is there any work in which no imagination is needed?

2. In what ways does the career of Napoleon show imagination? Give an illustration.

3. "A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."
What else might it have been?

4. Describe something that we see with our eyes and something that we picture through our power of imagination.

5. (*a*) "A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively." Is this true? Why?

6. (*a*) Give an example of an inconsiderate act done by an unimaginative person which no one of quick imagination would have committed.

(*b*) What sins are due largely to lack of imagination?

7. A party of people in New York are dining luxuriously at a restaurant. Next door a family of eight is huddling supperless round a dying fire. If for an instant this scene became visible to the diners, would they be sinful to go on eating and laughing?

8. "Every Jack sees in his Jill charms and perfections to which we stolid onlookers are stone cold." Has Jack or the outsider the truest view of Jill and why?

9. Does it seems to you that the man who has a keen

imagination is likely to be more or less practical than the man who has very little? Why?

## NOTES

Imagination is to be distinguished from fancy in that imagination is always guided by and loyal to the trend of reality while fancy is ungoverned. This distinction should be made clear to the class.

We need imagination in whatever we undertake unless the work is purely mechanical, and even in this case the man of imagination will soon devise ways to minimise the drudgery. This is brought out in Questions 1 and 2.

The same fact viewed with or without imaginative insight may be commonplace or full of romance. This is brought out in Question 3.

That we all have some imagination is shown by the fact that in all we see we also construct. This is brought out by Question 4.

So far we have not dwelt on the direct relation of imagination to goodness. The remaining questions illustrate this relation. Question 5 brings out the reasons why intense and comprehensive imagination is necessary to goodness, and Questions 6 and 7 enforce this by concrete illustrations of the misdeeds which are due to callousness.

Question 8 shows the close link between true affection and imagination, and Question 9 sums up the value of imagination by drawing out its practical bearings. Since imagination is of supreme value in moral life, it must be cultivated; it can best be widened by enlarging the crannies of imagination which we already possess.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Take any interest that is especially keen in members of the class and show how much imagination they use in relation to it.

For example, show how the idea of success in athletics will make a boy give up other pleasure, or how the sight of an invitation to a dance will make a girl's spirits rise; how much imagination people show in buying furs in summer or by planting trees in a park for the benefit of future generations. Take, for examples of constructive imagination, the gift to the city of Boston by Benjamin Franklin which was not to be used for one hundred years, or the foresight shown by the writers of the Constitution of the United States.

Show that it is lack of imagination which makes people stare at a deformed woman, call Italians "dagoes," or poorer children "muckers," and injure property which is not theirs.

On the general subject of imagination read C. C. Everett's "Poetry, Comedy, and Duty."

As examples of vivid imagination in poetry read to the class Kipling's "Deep Sea Cable," Leigh Hunt's "The Fish and the Man," Emily Dickinson's "Railroad Train" and "The Snake."

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Imagination is the power to make anything real and to make dull subjects become alive.

Through imagination we fill in the gaps and make a whole out of fragments.

Without imagination we cannot see truly, for to be lukewarm in a glowing world is to miss the truth.

We all possess imagination, but do not use it enough.

Selfishness, cruelty, dishonesty, shiftlessness, prejudice, are due to lack of imagination.

Imagination breaks down the barriers of time, distance and difference of circumstance and lets us see things as they are.

The use of imagination is as valuable and as practicable as is the use of electricity, but like electricity it must be directed and controlled by one's purpose.

## SUBJECT XV

### MEMORY

Read Emerson's "Natural History of Intellect," pp. 74-78.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. In what way would a strong memory help to keep anyone out of temptation? Give an example. What does memory add to life?

2. Is it a good or a bad plan to make New Year's resolutions? Why? How can we prevent ourselves from breaking or forgetting them?

3. I have been to see an intimate friend who lives in India and whom I have not met for years. It was a most unsatisfactory visit for we talked about nothing but trifles like the heat and the voyage. How could I have made the visit more satisfactory?

4. Give an example of the kind of things you remember best and of those you are likely to forget.

5. If you wanted to remember what was said at an important lecture and had no note book, how should you plan to do it?

6. "I can't tell my engagements now, for my note book is my memory, and I left it at home this morning." Is it wise or unwise to depend on note books? What are the dangers and the advantages?

7. How can anyone teach himself not to forget?

8. Why is deliberate forgetting sometimes a duty? What things ought we to forget and what to remember?

### NOTES

Read Emerson's "Essay on Memory."

Memory is central to moral life because without memory

it is impossible to carry out any plan and all responsibility ceases.

But not only is it true that without memory there is no moral life, it is also by using our memory that we overcome temptation. This is brought out in Questions 1 and 2.

Read on this subject Professor Wm. James's "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," p. 184.

It is not merely in the overcoming of specific temptations that we require active memory. We need it also to glean the largest harvest from any experience. This is shown by Question 3.

We are helped to see how to develop memory by classifying what it is we naturally do remember, and by observing our own methods of recalling or fixing in our mind any important topic. See Questions 4, 5 and 6.

Forethought, resolute interest, and careful, systematic recall, these are the principal means by which we can keep ourselves from forgetting what we need to hold fast. This is the answer to Question 7.

The duty of forgetting is simply one aspect of the duty of memory. We must try to put aside for the time all that will interfere with our most pressing aim. We can rightly assign the memory of disconnected facts to note books; we must learn to shove aside the trivial for the sake of the important, and to cease dwelling on anything whose lesson we have learned. (Question 8.)

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Read the chapter on memory in Wm. James's "Larger Psychology."

A very interesting illustration of the need of forgetting will be found in an essay by Alice Meynell, "A Woman in Grey," in the volume of her essays called "The Colour of Life."

The class should study Kipling's "Recessional" from the point of view of the need of memory.

Show how the statesman, the wise counsellor, the historian, the artist, need memory.

Show how quickly anger or unreasoning discouragement would be diminished by a sensible use of memory.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Memory holds our lives together and so helps us to live with the whole of ourselves.

In planning, we must live in the future and in the past, in acting, we must live in the present.

Never make a resolution without recalling the difficulty of keeping it.

Never break a resolution without trying to think why you made it.

Without memory we are easily led into temptation and are easily discouraged. Without memory we cannot help other people.

If you want to remember a special subject (*a*) put your imagination into what you wish not to forget. (*b*) Shove aside other ideas. (*c*) Recall the connection with things that you are interested in. (*d*) Impress it by some definite act (*e.g.*, Drawing or writing).

## SUBJECT XVI

## COURAGE

Read Phillips Brooks's "Essay and Addresses," pp. 320-329.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. A man and his sister are driving together when the horse runs away. The man is much frightened, the woman not at all. Does this show that she is brave and he cowardly? What facts do we need in order to be sure?

2. If an officer trembles with fear when under fire, but remains at his post, is he brave or cowardly? If he avoids danger is he a coward?

3. When Robert Shaw led the despised negro regiment into battle, was it physical courage that made him scorn danger and moral courage that made him face derision, or is there but one kind of courage?

4. Give a definition of cowardice. Should women be more excused for cowardice than men? Why, or why not?

5. Are there any times when we ought to feel fear? Are there any times when we ought to be cowardly? Give an example of fear and of cowardice and show the difference between them.

6. What opportunities are there to show courage in a peaceful and civilised country? Are there any such opportunities in school life?

7. What act is among the bravest you know of in history or literature? What conditions make an act especially brave?

8. How does one get over being afraid and how, if afraid, does one keep oneself from cowardice?

## NOTES

The aim of this chapter is (*a*) to distinguish the moral virtue of courage from the quality often mistaken for it, namely fearlessness, (*b*) to show the opportunities for courage that lie all about us, and (*c*) to point to the main sources from which courage may be drawn.

Courage always involves the effort to control fear and therefore is clearly distinguished from fearlessness, which may be due to obtuseness, to ignorance or to the knowledge that one is safe in spite of appearances. This is brought out in Questions 1 and 2.

It should also be brought out in the discussion of Question 2 that we cannot rightly condemn any *act* as cowardly. The same act may be due to courage in one man, to fearlessness in a second, and to cowardice in a third.

The definition of courage as the effort to control fear through a devotion to a purpose greater than any personal loss, indicates that there is only one kind of courage properly so called and that is the courage due to the *conquest* of fear through a stronger love. So called "physical" courage is either fearlessness (native or acquired) or it is moral courage exercised under conditions of physical danger. This distinction can be brought out in the discussion of the answers to Question 3, and it is met again in Question 4. No one is to be excused more than another for the same degree of *cowardice,* but the more sensitive or untrained the nature the more courageous is the act of resistance to fear. The difference of fear and cowardice should be richly illustrated in the answers to Question 5.

We come now to the daily opportunities for courage, many of which will be suggested by the class in answer to Question 6.

The choice of the bravest act known in history or literature in answer to Question 7, gives an opportunity to discuss the essence of courage and its direct relation to self-conquest. A pamphlet by Sherman Hoar on "American

Courage" gives excellent examples of different types of heroism.

Finally we need to consider the steps by which cowardice is overcome, and in this connection the organic relation of courage to devotion to our aim, and to loyal memory of that ideal should be brought out. (Question 8.)

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Read Emerson's essay on "Courage" in "Society and Solitude," and discuss the question whether courage consists in being equal to the problem before you.

Read in Charles Wagner's "Vaillance" the chapter on Fear and show by different cases that "perfect love casteth out fear," by freeing us from egotism, and making us one with a cause to which it is worth giving our life.

Read Carl Hilty's pages on the uselessness of fear in his "Happiness," page 47 (translated by Francis G. Peabody), and R. L. Stevenson's essay on "Crabbed Age and Youth."

Opportunities for courage in times of peace are common in the life of policemen, firemen, engineers, nurses, doctors, horse-breakers, athletes, divers, politicians and business men who follow their own convictions. We can show courage in facing ridicule, in confessing wrong-doing, in standing by those who are disliked, in dressing according to our means instead of copying those richer than ourselves, in speaking the truth, in giving and taking unflinchingly all necessary pain.

If the class has read Hamlet, discuss the question whether it took courage in Hamlet to follow the ghost in spite of the warnings of Horatio. Discuss the difference between rashness, recklessness and courage, and show that courage is the effort to keep one's presence of mind in the face of dreaded danger, whereas recklessness is unaware of or pays no heed to the danger, while rashness makes no attempt to judge of the wisdom of its daring act.

If the class is familiar with Shakspere there is an un-

usually rich field of illustration. Compare and contrast the courage shown by Brutus and by Portia in Julius Cæsar, by Antonio in the Merchant of Venice, by Othello, by Cordelia in King Lear, by Henry V.

Courage is so fertile a subject that a second lesson may well be devoted to it. I have therefore added an additional set of questions.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS—2D SET

Read "American Courage," by Sherman Hoar, pp. 1-26.

1. Which of the examples of courage which he gives seems to you noblest, and why?

2. (*a*) If a band of train robbers should demand the surrender of all he possessed from an unarmed man in the car would it be courage or rashness on his part to resist?

(*b*) Would there be any circumstances we should need to know in order to decide?

(*c*) Can a rash act be brave, and if so how does one distinguish rashness from courage?

3. "Always do what you are afraid to do." Is this a good rule? Are there any exceptions to it?

4. If you were afraid to speak in public, how should you try to conquer your fear?

5. Henry Lawrence was once insulted and challenged to a duel. In spite of the entreaties of his wife he accepted the challenge. How are we to tell whether this showed courage or cowardice in him? Is there any insult which demands a blow?

6. (*a*) If Lincoln's restoration of Mason and Slidell to England was an act of great foresight, does that make it any less courageous?

(*b*) Can we have courage without foresight?

(*c*) If we know the exact result of an action is there any opportunity for courage?

7. Can a man be prudent and heroic at the same time?

8. Is discretion the better part of valour? If so when and why?

SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Without fear there is no fresh exercise of courage.

Courage is the control of fear by faith in and devotion to our aim. "Perfect love casteth out fear."

All growing people are sometimes afraid, but no one need be cowardly, for cowardice is the failure to try to overcome fear; it is the avoidance of a danger which lies across our path of advance.

Cowardice makes the soul dwindle, and no danger is as great as the danger of becoming less of a person. We should dread the pain of cowardice more than any other pain.

We can increase our courage by knowledge, by practice, by constant memory of our aim, by the inspiration of noble lives, and by religious faith.

## SUBJECT XVII

## QUICK FEELING AND STEADY THOUGHT

Read "Five Hundred Dollars," by C. W. H. (Heman W. Chaplin), pp. 143-162.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Do you agree with Eli that "there's such a thing as arguing and there's such a thing as knowing outright"? Why was it right for Eli to trust to his feeling?

2. Suppose a friend said to you: "Whenever I hear one side of an argument I am instantly converted to that side, but when I hear the other side I forget the first. Why does this happen and what shall I do about it?" What advice should you give?

3. If you feel that a Beethoven symphony is beautiful and your friend does not care for it at all, how are you to make her see your point of view?

4. Amiel says: "Women wish to be loved without a why or a wherefore; not because they are pretty or wise or good, but because they are themselves." Does this seem to you natural and wise?

5. "I knew Mr. Black was untrustworthy. I was convinced of it the moment I laid eyes on him." Is such an instinct generally reliable? Under what circumstances would it be apt to be wrong?

6. Are there any subjects in which it is best to trust to feeling? Is this true of business, of religion?

7. Why are impulsive people more attractive than thoughtful ones? To which should you go if you wanted important advice? Why?

8. If you have put a great deal of thought into any work are you likely to have more or less feeling about it than if you had done it impulsively? Give an example.

9. Do the greatest men trust more to instinct or to thought? Give an example. Does a charity worker require more thought or feeling in his work?

## NOTES

The main purpose of the chapter is to break down the sharp division between thought and feeling and to show:

1. That feeling and thought are not widely separated, but closely related. We feel most strongly about that into which we have put the most persistent thought.

2. The separation of thought from feeling is both psychologically inaccurate and disastrous in practice. All good thought is warmed to life by the heat of feeling and all effective feeling is held steady by thought. This is brought out in Question 6.

3. The danger of feeling not based on reason is four-fold:

(*a*) It is unconvincing except to those who share it.

(*b*) It is inarticulate.

(*c*) It grows cold.

(*d*) It leads to harmful acts of impulse.

This is brought out in Questions 1, 2, 3, and 5.

The true significance of the popular trust in feeling is that feeling has a wholeness and warmth without which thought becomes disconnected from experience. This is brought out in Questions 5 and 8.

The final conclusion is that feeling grows by the exercise of thought and all live thought has its roots in feeling. The warm, steady glow of trained, thoughtful emotion, has made possible the great charities, reforms and inventions of the world. This is brought out in Question 9.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Give as examples of the close relation of thought to feeling, Lincoln's passion for the Union; the intense patriotism of Nolan in Edward E. Hale's "Man Without a Country," or Darwin's devotion to his growing seedlings.

As examples of the limitations of unreasoning impulses, take the following cases:

A little newsboy who ought to be at school is selling papers in the cold. My impulse is to give him a quarter. I thereby encourage his parents to send him out again.

I look out of the window and see boys and girls skating and at once become possessed with the impulse to join them. All idea of work is driven out of my mind.

I hear a fire alarm and cannot resist going to the fire, although if I thought about it I should remember an important engagement.

Show the distinction between unroused, mechanical analysis, such as may be appropriate and useful in adding up fractions or in copying music, and the burning thought that goes into planning new tactics for an army, shown in Napoleon's campaigns.

An experienced doctor may have quick and accurate intuitions concerning the illness of a patient, an expert in charity can judge quickly of the need of an applicant. Show how different are the intuitions based on long experience from those made without such knowledge. Read on this subject William D. Howells's "Essays and Impressions."

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Feeling is the source of thought and without thought feeling would be lifeless.

All good thought is warm thought.

All sound feeling is based on thought at some time.

1. Feeling without thought cannot convince anyone.
2. It is inarticulate.
3. Feeling grows cold unless it is sustained by thought.
4. Feeling without thought often leads to harmful acts.

In any new or important work we need glowing thought and trained emotion.

## SUBJECT XVIII

## THOUGHT AND ACTION

Read Palmer's "Nature of Goodness," pp. 224-233.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. A passenger is sitting with the engineer in his engine. Suddenly a train is seen approaching at full speed on the same track. If both the engineer and the passenger acted instantly, why would the act of the engineer be more likely to be reasonable?

Would there be any thought in it?

2. If you have a hard piece of work to do, will thought about it make you do it faster or slower in the end? Give an example.

3. In what way does thought about any subject help one in action? Give an example.

4. (*a*) Are there any times when we ought to stop thinking?

(*b*) What is the difference between thinking and worrying?

5. "Where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise."

Do you agree with this? Why, or why not?

6. Would Hamlet have been a greater man if he had thought less? Why, or why not? Did Hamlet feel too little?

7. "This weighin' things doos wal enough
When war cools down an' comes to writin',
But when its makin' the true stuff
Is pison-mad, pigheaded fightin'."

—*Lowell, "Biglow Papers."*

Is pigheaded fighting ever right, and if so, why? What is the difference between obstinacy and firmness?

8. A girl is walking home at dusk when she is met by some very attractive friends who urge her to come to their house where they are going to have great fun. She knows that her mother would disapprove of her being out late and hesitates. Would she be more likely to decide right if she followed her first impulse, or if she tried to reason about it?

## NOTES

The aim of this chapter is to clear up the tangle that often surrounds the relation of thought to action by showing in what ways and at what times reflection is of value.

The first distinction that needs to be made is between thought in preparation for action and thought at the instant of action. This is brought out in Question 1.

Thought at some time is needed in any act that has not become purely mechanical through repetition, but genuine thought must be distinguished from irrelevant questioning. This difference is brought out in Question 2.

Thought about any situation helps us to bring the act into relation with the rest of our purposes so that we shall not later regret it. The danger of impulsive action should be exemplified by various examples, such as cutting out a dress without thinking of the most economical method, buying a horse before counting the cost of keeping him, or accepting a responsibility that we have not time to fulfil. These points should be brought out by the answers to Question 3.

On the other hand thinking is only one aspect of life and we ought to control it when rest is imperative, when the matter in hand is trifling, when energetic and prompt action is needed, and when a decision has already been made to the best of our ability. This is brought out in Questions 4, 6 and 7.

It is often argued that ignorance is apt to be bliss and that therefore the effort at understanding is a mistake. It should be brought out in answer to Question 5, that this is only true when pleasure and not progress is the aim of life.

The special relation of thought to the overcoming of temptation is brought out in Question 8. Recollection of our deepest aim will keep us from wrong doing and will make us ready for outwardly dull tasks that have an important significance. But, as we before distinguished between thought and irrelevant questioning or worry, so here we must distinguish between thought and sophistry. All sophistry is poisonous and should be rejected the instant it is recognised.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The answers to Question 3 will suggest new illustrations which should be followed out. In Jacob Riis's "Making of an American," there are various instances given of impulsive or thoughtless action that could have been controlled or moulded by thought. At one time, for example, Riis spent all his money for a horse, when he could not ride and had no stable.

On the relation of thought to action and especially to temptation, read Professor James's "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," pages 169-189. Use in the class his examples of getting up in the morning and of the drunkard's thought about the effects of drinking.

Bring out the point that many bodily acts are best done without thought and use as an example the verse:

> "The centipede was happy quite,
> Until the toad for fun
> Said, 'Pray which leg comes after which?'
> This worked her mind to such a pitch
> She lay distracted in a ditch,
> Considering how to run,"

quoted in Professor George H. Palmer's "Nature of Goodness," p. 214.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Thought delays action at first by making us compare different ideals and plans, but sensible thought makes action

more effective and permanent and therefore saves time in the end.

We should control thought:

1. When it is time to act.

2. When we have once carefully decided on an act and no new evidence is at hand.

3. When we need rest.

4. When the subject is trifling and thought about it interferes with our work.

5. When we find ourselves arguing falsely.

6. When we are worrying, that is when thought goes round and round instead of going straight ahead.

## EXAMINATION II

1. Does a man of strong imagination require more or less courage in meeting danger than an unimaginative one? If so, why is it not better to be without imagination?

2. Give a definition of a selfish act which clearly distinguishes it from an unselfish one and from a harmful act done in ignorance. Give an example of an act that is certainly unselfish.

3. If a football player is devoted to the success of his team is it accurate to call him a self-sacrificing man? Why, or why not?

4. Ought we to trust wholly to instinct throughout any friendship or should we at any time stop and think about it? If the latter, what ought we to consider?

5. Show why a person with little memory can never be a really good friend.

6. Ruskin says: "What we think or what we know or what we believe is of little consequence, the only thing of consequence is what we do." Is this true or false, and why?

7. If you wanted to help a bored and unhappy person who was well off and had no special claims, in what ways should you try to help?

## SUBJECT XIX

## TRUTH

Read James Russell Lowell's Poem, "The Present Crisis."

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Why does Lowell believe that—

> "Though the cause of evil prosper,
> Yet 'tis Truth alone is strong?"

Is this proved by history? Give an example.

2. It is well known that Eastern nations value truth less than we do. If a native of Japan should ask you why you thought truth-speaking right, what should you answer? What would happen if everyone told lies?

3. "To speak the truth is to say what you think." Is this an adequate definition? If not, give a better or more complete one.

4. Is it right to use the phrases: "I am glad to see you," or "I regret extremely," in cases where you have no such feeling?

Is there any real difference of principle between "white lies" and black ones, and if so what is it?

5. If by saying what is literally accurate we intentionally give a false impression, is it any less untrue than if we told a direct lie? Which seems to you the worst?

6. Name all the motives you can think of which lead people to falsehood in speech and in action. Are any of these motives as important as truthfulness?

7. If you had charge of a child who was inclined to lie, by what method should you try to overcome this habit? Would the method differ with different children?

8. If you seriously ask anyone a question do you ever want a false answer? Is there any reason for treating other people differently in this respect from the way in which you would want to be treated?

## NOTES

The live and weighty question: Why is it right to speak the truth? leads us to an analysis of the nature of truth. In order to bring to bear the full force of the might of truth, we must first show that truth is reality and therefore always triumphs, while conversely falsehood always bears in itself the germs of its own destruction. This should be brought out by the answers to Question 1, and illustrated by the downfall of corruption throughout history,—for example in the fall of Rome, in the breaking up of the Tweed Ring, in the abolition of slavery, and on the positive side by the rise of Christianity, or the advance of the Merit System in England and America.

The fact that our whole civilisation is supported on truth, and its twin virtue honesty, is brought out in Question 2, and cannot be too forcibly impressed on the pupils. Their realisation of the importance of truth-speaking will depend largely on their full recognition of the relation between honesty and community life.

We next analyse the essence of truth-speaking and it is seen to consist not in literal accuracy nor in brutal frankness, but in the careful effort to convey the right impression. This is brought out in Questions 3, 4 and 5.

An analysis of the *motives* of lying will help to bring out in what ways the temptation to lie arises in people of differing temperament. The motives are very varied and include love of excitement, embarrassment, carelessness, cowardice, self-seeking, politeness, and soft-heartedness. Many of these lies are almost beyond the border of consciousness and can best be overcome by being clearly faced. Lies due to fear or self-seeking are cured by the enlarging of faith and

sympathy, and lies due to mistaken kindliness by showing their ultimate harm and their destructive quality. Clearly the treatment of the habit of lying differs with its cause as does the treatment of symptoms in disease. This should be brought out in the answers to Questions 6 and 7.

In Question 8 I have tried to show that the great majority of serious questioners want to hear the truth and that therefore to lie to them is not doing as we would be done by.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

It is important to make the strength of truth and the instability of falsehood vivid by varied illustrations and similes. Truth may be represented and drawn on the blackboard as a pyramid resting firmly on its base, and falsehood as an inverted pyramid which always tends to tumble over, and is propped up, if at all, only by external supports which will themselves decay. Every lie makes the structure more top-heavy and its fall more certain.

Again falsehood may be compared to a cankerworm, gnawing away bit by bit the entire fibre of the leaves of an elm tree, so that though at first the effect is not noticeable, the tree is finally left bare and dry.

The use of lies to avoid giving discomfort may be accurately compared to a wheel-grease which, though it at first makes the wheels turn smoothly and noiselessly, yet contains in itself an acid that all the time is eating out the structure of the wheel so that by and by no movement will be possible.

Stevenson says: "The cruelest lies are often told in silence. A man may have sat for hours and not opened his teeth and yet come out of that room a disloyal friend and a vile calumniator." Discuss the truth of this statement in class and let the pupils illustrate it by examples.

"A lie is the abandonment of the dignity of man," Kant said. Show why this is so.

SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Truthfulness is the conscientious effort to convey an accurate impression.

Conventions, passing jokes, fairy tales, and games where deception plays a part are not lies, because they are understood by those concerned in them.

We lie when in any serious situation, not understood as a joke or game, we aim to give a wrong impression. This is equally true whether we use literal accuracy or not and whether we succeed or fail in deceiving.

Reasons for truth-speaking:

Truth is reality and bears up all who rest on it.

Falsehoods are unreal and must crumble in the end.

All lies begin to poison human intercourse, to make language meaningless, to destroy civilisation.

Every lie takes one stone out of the bridge over which everyone must pass.

## SUBJECT XX

## TRUTH SPEAKING AS A FINE ART

Read R. L. Stevenson on "Truth of Intercourse," "Virginibus Pueresque," pp. 63-76.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Do you agree with Stevenson that it is hard to speak the truth? Why, or why not?

2. What qualities are needed in order to give a true impression on a difficult and delicate subject which the hearer is likely to misunderstand? Give an example.

3. Is absolute truthfulness compatible with perfect courtesy?

4. A friend gave me a concert ticket. I found the concert extremely dull. What ought I to say if my friend asks me how I enjoyed it?

5. What are the common occasions on which people are tempted to lie? Is there any use in trying to prepare beforehand how to meet similar occasions without lying? Give an example.

6. Two people are your friends. One is so tender-hearted and kindly that he will not hurt your feelings by a hard truth, even though he has to lie in order to make you comfortable. The second is loyal and downright and always says what he thinks, no matter what question you ask. Which is the friend to be preferred, and why?

7. Do the occasions in which we are tempted to deceive diminish or increase as we gain in character and in experience? Why?

8. Are there any cases in which it is right to lie, and if so how do you distinguish these cases from those in which it is wrong?

NOTES

It is not sufficiently recognised that because speaking the truth means the effort to convey an accurate impression, it is no unskilled task, but really a fine art. Truth can only be conveyed when one is in a loving and outgoing attitude and ready to put forethought and ingenuity into the delivery of the new message. This should be brought out in the answers to Question 1.

Again, so inwrought is truth with the whole of character that to convey the truth in any difficult situation requires courage, patience, imagination, self-control, sympathy, firmness, perseverance. The significance of this,—the fact that truth is no isolated virtue, but the centre of moral life,—should be brought out in the discussion of Question 2.

In the next three questions we discuss ways and means of the most successful truth-telling. Some members of the class will be apt to maintain that truth-speaking is not always compatible with courtesy. I think it can be shown that, when spoken with the right motive and in the most considerate way, truth is far more courteous than a lie. For in the first place a lie in answer to a deliberate question is an insult to the seriousness or the valour of the questioner; it brands him as an outcast or a weakling. In the second place the lie, though it maintains a temporary appearance of courtesy, is of so flimsy a material that it soon wears through, and then no matter how great the desire to give pleasure by one's just commendation the chance is forfeited. On a brief and shallow survey, lying seems courteous, more widely and thoroughly looked at the polite lie shows the discourtesy born of distrust. This should be brought out in answer to Question 3.

In Question 4 a specific case is taken up and comment on the answers should include the suggestion that when we courteously lie we almost always involve ourselves in further lies.

When we have clearly faced both the need and the diffi-

culty of truth-speaking we are ready to answer Question 5. Is it possible to prepare for common moral emergencies as we have learned to prepare ourselves for physical emergencies? I believe that it is and that we shall find it of greater value than can be realised without a thorough trial. By facing probable situations of difficulty beforehand in a sympathetic and thorough way, we shall greatly diminish the danger either of lying to or quarrelling with our hearer.

Various examples of this are given in the text.

Question 6 exemplifies the relation of friendship to truthfulness. Almost everyone wants on the whole the truthful, and therefore the reliable, friend, even though he may give more pain than he who tries at all cost to spare one's feelings.

Finally in Questions 7 and 8 we sum up the whole issue. The teacher should here re-enforce three points:

1. The relation of truth to the whole structure of civilisation.

2. The self-destructive character of lying as it is seen whenever we take a long, thorough view of the consequences of a lie.

3. The inseparable relation of truth to uprightness of character.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND QUESTIONS

If I know that the sidewalk is going to be slippery, I provide beforehand against the danger of falling by wearing overshoes; so if I know that I am likely to be questioned by my hostess about her party or by an acquaintance about a secret which I am pledged to keep, I should provide beforehand against the danger of slipping either by lying or by betrayal.

Grant when a boy was sent by his father to buy a colt. "My father told me to offer you $20 at first and if you refused $25," he said to the dealer before asking the price. Ought everyone to practise such direct honesty? What would

be the results good or bad if all were absolutely straightforward in business?

Discuss Shakspere's lines:

"This, above all. To thine own self be true
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Why is this so?

Are there in our time any occasions when we ought to be a martyr for the sake of truth? If so give an example.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

To speak the truth we need sympathy, patience, accuracy, firmness, courage, imagination and memory.

Truth-speaking requires skill, and such skill can only be gained by practice and by careful and considerate forethought about difficult cases.

To lie to anyone is to treat him as an outcast or a weakling, and is therefore an act of disdain, not of true courtesy.

To convey a true impression we must feel warmly and live uprightly.

We should be ready both to give and to receive pain if thereby we can strengthen the bond of truth.

## SUBJECT XXI

## OPENMINDEDNESS AND PREJUDICE

Read Knowlson's "Art of Thinking," pp. 34-44.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. What do you mean by prejudice? Give an example. Ought one ever to have any prejudices?

2. Is it possible to be wholly loyal to our family or to our country and yet be willing to admit that any other set of people or any other nation is greater? Why, or why not?

3. (*a*) What is the difference between a strong conviction and a strong prejudice?

(*b*) Give an example of a great man who, by his openmindedness, helped the progress of the world.

4. On what subjects are people most likely to be prejudiced? What harm does his prejudice do to the person who has it?

5. If you see a poor woman with a torn skirt, walking with two children whose faces are dirty and whose boot-buttons are off, have you a right to judge that she is slovenly? Why, or why not?

6. "I do not like you Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell."

Has anyone a right to like or dislike a person without in the least knowing the reason? If not, what ought we to do about it?

7. If you had a strong prejudice against negroes or Chinamen how should you try to get rid of it?

8. Is a sense of humour apt to make anyone more or less openminded than if he had none? Why?

## NOTES

When we penetrate below obvious falsehood or careless exaggeration we find a subtler type of untruth, namely prejudice, which is a deliberate exclusion of the light of reality.

Prejudice is the harder to combat because its adherents associate it with loyalty and strength. In the answers to Questions 2 and 3, it should therefore be shown that the truest loyalty necessitates openmindedness, for all prejudice in favour of what we love prevents us from making it even better than it is, and so weakens instead of strengthening. It should also be shown that openmindedness is wholly compatible with intense conviction, as is illustrated by the life of Socrates, of St. Paul, of Darwin, of Lincoln.

We come next to a study of common cases of prejudice in order to learn where our prison walls are and how to batter them down. In the answers to Question 4 we shall see that our prejudices of race, caste, and creed are futile efforts to defend ourselves by exclusion, instead of becoming invulnerable through *including* the good points of those who differ from us.

In Questions 5 and 6 we consider the prejudgments formed by taking a superficial view of anything and letting it lead us to condemn the whole. Can we rightly judge that dirt means slovenliness? Not until we too have known the stress of poverty. Have we any right to let an unreasoned dislike rule our conduct? No, our dislike may possibly be justifiable and significant, but until we try to trace its source and to see whether it is due to superficial traits we run great danger of being unjust.

The question then remains: How shall we best get over prejudice? In the answers to Questions 7 and 8, three important ways are suggested. When we find ourselves inclined to be prejudiced we must arouse our sympathy to appreciate

the good points of that which we are inclined to depreciate, we must put ourselves in the attitude of truth-seekers and not of partisans, and we must cultivate a sense of humour that will prevent our own views of affairs from becoming like near foothills that cut off the mountains of broader experience beyond.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Discuss the prejudices of caste and race and bring out the appealing side in types of people whom we tend to condemn.

Discuss common superstitions such as those of breaking a mirror, travelling on Friday or sitting thirteen at table, and show their unreasonableness.

Read Mr. Dooley's paper on "The Heathen Chinee," in "Mr. Dooley in Peace and War," and bring out the prejudice of our judgment against Chinamen.

Emerson says: (Essays, 1st Series, Intellect.) "God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please, you can never have both. . . . He in whom the love of repose predominates will accept the first creed, the first philosophy, the first political party he meets,—most likely his father's. He gets rest, commodity and reputation, but he shuts the door of truth." Discuss the question whether a prejudiced person can be wholly truthful.

Illustrate the value of openmindedness by the attitude of Socrates, of St. Paul, of Darwin, of Lincoln and show how hard to maintain and how helpful to the world their perfect love of truth has been.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

Prejudice is a blind judgment unguided by the light of truth.

The truthseeker will not intentionally deceive by word or by silence, by exaggeration or by prejudice.

Loyalty to anyone requires openmindedness toward the good in others.

"We ought at least to do a man as much justice as a picture and put him in a good light."—Emerson.

Prejudice shuts one off from widening experience and makes the soul shrivel.

To free ourselves from prejudice we must love truth better than any of our opinions; we must want progress more than self-satisfaction, we must cultivate a sense of humour in regard to our own affairs, we must turn the warmth of sympathy toward that which we are inclined to depreciate.

## SUBJECT XXII

## OBEDIENCE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

Read Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. What do you mean by self-government? Is it a wise plan to give college students self-government? What good and what harm might come of it?

2. "I should love to go with you to see Mansfield act, but I simply must study or I shall not pass my examinations." Why is this an act of self-government? Is it any better to obey yourself than to obey an outsider? Why?

3. A Russian peasant obeys the decrees of the Czar. An American obeys the laws of his country. Is there any difference in the kind of obedience in these two cases? In what ways is it true that the United States stands for government of the people, by the people, and for the people?

4. If a boy always does exactly what he pleases at every moment, is he free or not? Give an illustration.

5. If the leader of the Light Brigade at Balaklava knew that someone had blundered, why was he right to obey the command?

Would such blind obedience have been right in time of peace?

6. Was Casabianca in Mrs. Hemans' poem, "The boy stood on the burning deck," right or wrong to obey his father and stay on the burning ship till he perished? Why? Are there any times when we ought to obey without thinking?

7. William Penn was imprisoned many times for disobedience to authority. The accusations against him were:

(*a*) That he insisted on preaching the Quaker doctrine.

(*b*) That he would not take off his hat even to the King.

(*c*) That he would not take the oath of allegiance.

Was Penn right or wrong in these acts of disobedience, and should you make any distinction in the three cases?

8. (*a*) Is there any act which is not one of obedience to something?

(*b*) If disobedience to external authority is ever right, on what principle shall we decide when it is right?

## NOTES

It is of great importance to explain the meaning of self-government, for without self-government there can be no moral life. Bring out first its apparently paradoxical nature. Government involves both master and servant; but when master and servant are one and the same person, how is any obedience possible? Show in answer to Question 1 that this command given by our own larger insight to our momentary impulses is everywhere present, though paradoxical, and that it is of the essence of all moral life. Illustrate this by the value of self-government at college.

Self-government then is the obedience of the momentary or narrow wish to the more lasting, chosen purpose, and is shown not only in great decisions, but in every right choice. This is brought out by Question 2.

In Question 3 we apply this idea of self-government to national relations. The will of all of us must for the good of all control the anarchical will of any of us. In Russia, on the contrary, the arbitrary will of a small aristocracy dominates the will of the many.

The condition of servitude illustrated by any tyranny seems very different from servitude to our whims or habits, but it is essentially the same. Both gradually crush the power of will and make action automatic. This relation of caprice to slavery should be brought out in Question 4.

Somewhat higher in the ascent toward self-government is

military obedience, which is at least based on a free choice, though the bondage may be absolute after it is accepted. In times of peace blind obedience to command, such as is illustrated in Question 5, would be wrong except in emergencies where instant and united action is imperative.

Obedience to parents is, at its highest, obedience to what is recognised as our wiser self, but even here such obedience should be to the spirit, not the letter of command, and must develop more and more into the pursuance of our own unique law. This is brought out in Question 6.

By the examples given so far it ought to become clear to the class that obedience and disobedience are not two sharply sundered acts, but that all obedience involves disobedience. This is brought out in Question 7.

When should we disobey external authority? Always and only when it conflicts with an obedience to a higher and more devoted aim. In every right act the consecration to obedience must outweigh the necessary disobedience which is involved. Question 8.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The chapter on obedience in Charles Wagner's "Vaillance," gives exactly the right conception of its nature and should be read and discussed by the class.

The evil results of subservience to another's arbitrary will are well shown in the chapter called "The effects of Minding on the Mind," in Charlotte Gilman's book "Concerning Children."

Show that true freedom can never be given, but must always be won, and illustrate this by the petty tyranny of bosses in city politics due to the indifference of well-meaning citizens.

All habits which are not our servants become our masters and rule us as an inflexible tyrant rules his slaves. Read on this subject Professor William James's chapter on "Habit" in his "Psychology."

SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

All obedience is submission to authority, but self-government is loyal obedience to one's largest and most enduring purpose.

All right obedience is the expression of yourself in the best service you know. Self-government trains one's mind and character and makes one ready for new decisions.

All right disobedience must be for the sake of a higher obedience.

We should obey instantly:

1. Commands which we have previously decided are right.
2. In emergencies when someone knows better than we do.
3. When we have joined a group under a leader whom we trust.
4. In little things in order to save energy.

## SUBJECT XXIII

## THE USE OF TIME

Read Stevenson's "Virginibus Puerisque," pp. 117-125.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS

1. Since all time has to be spent in doing something and since it is impossible to hoard it what do we mean by saving time and how is it done?

What is the use of saving it?

2. In what ways do people waste time? Are these ways the same for everyone? Does all amusement waste time and all work save it?

3. Many people who have a hard piece of work to do are inclined to look out of the window, write a note, or dip into a book instead. In what ways can this habit best be overcome? Is it always a waste of time to do odds and ends when one has an important piece of work on hand? Give an example.

4. Do men or women waste more time as a rule, and why? Why do the busiest people have most time?

5. Are there any circumstances in which it is right to try to kill time? Give an example of what you mean by killing time.

6. Do you agree with Stevenson that a faculty for idleness is good? Why, or why not? What is the meaning and value of leisure?

7. Emerson says: "Profligacy does not consist in spending years of time or chests of money but in spending them off the line of your career." Give an illustration of what he means by this. If we are our own masters is there any disloyalty in wasting time?

8. If you look forward ten years what do you hope

that those years will bring you? Would it be better to have them bring wide experience or the power to do any one thing really well?

## NOTES

Time is the raw material for all moral life and hence our use of time is the test of our uprightness. To save time is to spend it consistently and liberally on the vocation to which we are called.

This should be brought out by Question 1.

But if saving time is spending it to further our aim, the act which saves time for one person may be a waste for another, and so, as always, we cannot judge whether any act is a waste of time without knowing the purpose of the actor. Our definition of saving time classifies all waste of time as due either to aimlessness or to disloyalty to a chosen aim.

This should be brought out in Question 2, and is further illustrated by Question 3. To overcome our restless disloyalty we must try to recall our aim in all its vividness.

The relation of time to purpose is again accented in Question 4. Women as a rule waste more time than men simply because their purposes are less definite and their training less thorough. But this statement applies only to the woman of the so-called leisure class, and to her only because she has not definite enough demands on her loyalty.

The busiest people have most time because they have clear and definite aims; the pressure of work has taught them how to use wisely every spare moment. As any interest increases the value of money, so a purpose increases the value of time. For this reason the live and busy people never kill time. If it is unavailable for one purpose they eagerly seize it for another. These points should be brought out by Questions 4 and 5.

If we lay such stress on the use of time, there seems to be at first sight no place for rest, leisure and for the human touches of beauty and kindliness. This would be true did not thorough loyalty to an advancing aim require of us fresh

insight and sympathy. Such fresh insight is gathered by most of us in times of what we rightly call recreation, the renewing of ourselves that we may be more, not less, loyal to our ideal. Stevenson has well brought out this point and in the discussion of Questions 6 and 7 it should be clearly shown that refreshment is not disloyalty, but a saner loyalty, while wasting time is always sinful, whether or not we are our own employers.

Question 8, as the final question of this course, aims to make the students face their own future in the light of the principles discussed above.

## ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The literature on the subject of Time is unusually good. Read Carl Hilty's pages on how to work, "Happiness," translated by Francis G. Peabody, p. 73, Emerson's essay on "Power in the Conduct of Life," and in Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanac" the pages on the value of industry. Let the class learn Emerson's poem "Days," and the description of the passing of time in "As You Like It."

Compare the short life of Shelley or Mozart with that of a vagabond who dies of old age, and show how much more meaningful time is to the former.

Show how Louis Agassiz lying in the woods may be making a far more active use of time than a bewildered man rushing to and fro during a fire.

Bring out the value of time as the stuff life is made of, and show both that *we* need work to make the most of time, and that all earnest work is needed. He who wastes time blocks the track over which the train of life is moving.

## SUMMARY TO BE WRITTEN BY THE CLASS

"Dost thou love life; then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of."—Poor Richard's Almanac.

We save time by spending it liberally in the enriching and fulfilling of our aim.

We waste time by aimlessness and by disloyalty to our aim.

To save time in any work

(*a*) We must recall vividly why we are at work.

(*b*) We must face the consequences of not working.

(*c*) We must put ourselves in places where we are not likely to be interrupted.

(*d*) We must deliberately resist distraction.

(*e*) We must guard against carelessness, unnecessary repetition, dawdling, inattention, worry, indecision.

"If you were a servant would you not be ashamed to have your master catch you idle? You are your own master. Be ashamed to catch yourself idle."—Poor Richard's Almanac.

The best use of time usually includes a liberal enrichment of our lives by friendship, by beauty, by quiet preparation.

## EXAMINATION III

1. What changes, if any, have our discussions of truth and falsehood made in your ideas of the importance of truth? What now seem to you the reasons for truth-speaking and the exceptions, if there are any?

2. Has anyone a right to make a promise to keep a secret, if keeping it will probably involve lying? Has anyone a right to help a friend by stealing? What, if anything, is the difference in the two cases?

3. "Sin is power turned against oneself." Show (*a*) why to be sinful at all one must have some power, and (*b*) why in doing what we know is wrong we hurt ourselves.

4. Give a definition of self-government. Is it harder steadily to obey yourself or to submit to orders? Why?

5. In what ways will the fact of having a definite aim in life change a person? How and why will it affect his use of time, his happiness, his relation to his friends? What virtues will it develop?

6. Mention the special points in this course on ethics that stand out in your mind as being the most important.

# INDEX

# INDEX


Act, involuntary, 29, 356, 359; relation of to purpose, 42
Action, in emergency, 257; without evasion, 256; without fresh thought, 257
Activity, not passivity, needed for goodness, 5
Aimlessness and irresponsibility, 36; waste of time through, 229
Amusement, value of, 331
Art, the language of, 250; of truth speaking, 281, 417; view of, compared with that of ethics, 9
Articulateness, need of, 247
Attention, essence of a moral act, 83, 94, 263; repels temptation, 85

Boundary between voluntary and involuntary acts, 17
Browning, Robert, letter on obedience, 318

Chaplin, Heman W., *Story of Eli*, 240
Choice, ethics concerned with every, 40; necessary to moral life, 18
Conscientiousness, 93; analysis of, 94, 109; definition of, 96, 100, 108, 109, 374; relation to law, 110; right use of, 106, 107
Courage, 228, 401; contrasted with fearlessness, 228, 231, 402; control by reason, 234; definitions of, 229, 237, 402; helps in acquiring, 233-239; occasions for the exercise of, 233, 403; rashness compared with, 231
Cowardice, definition of, 231; suggestions for overcoming, 235-239, 405; distinction from fear, 402
Custom, 118; danger of, 120; relation to sense of guilt, 122; relation to sense of law, 377; value of, 119, 378

Darwin, Charles, 143, 146, 232, 300, 301
Deception, harm done by kindly, 287
Disloyalty, the thief of time, 329
Dix, Dorothea, 106, 146
Drudgery, 170-172, 386
Duty, an aspect of interest, 7, 380; definition of, 158, 386

Effort, sacrifice and drudgery, 158, 385; permanent need of, 159; relation to progress, 169
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 149, 165
Ethics, concerned with all conscious acts, 40; definition of, 1; laws of, 12, 353; relation to special decisions, 12-16; relation to goodness, 10; relation to will, 11; teaching, methods of, 347-349; universal interest of, 1, 7; value of study of, 13-16, 346, 354
Examinations, questions for, 383, 412, 432

Facts, necessary to conscientious decision, 101
Falsehood, corrosion of, 265
Faults, cured by an interest, 130; due to lack of interest, 134
Fear, conquest of, 233; influence of, on responsibility, 25; uselessness of, 238
Fearlessness, contrasted with courage, 228; gained by practice, 235
Feeling, danger of trust in, 241, 246, 407; relation to knowledge, 248; relation to thought, 244, 407, 408
Forgetfulness, faults due to, 218; question of responsibility for, 20-22, 37
Forgetting, an aspect of memory, 223
Franklin, Benjamin, *Poor Richard's Almanac*, 332
Friendship, demands truthfulness, 291

George Junior Republic, 322
Good for nothing, 49
Goodness, common elements in all, 46; definition of human, 354; essence of manhood, 46; of things, 52, 365; relation to purpose, 47-53, 365; relation to virtue, 55, 365

Habit, 67, 71
Hilty, Carl, *Happiness*, 238
Humour, 309, 423
Huxley, T. H., desire for automatic goodness, 17; sketch of Darwin's character, 300

Ignorance, and bliss, 260; in relation to moral responsibility, 23
Imagination, all possess, 202; contrasted with fancy, 203, 396; definition of, 204, 397; faults due to lack of, 210, 397; practical, 213, 397; relation to goodness, 396; value of, 204-212
Instinct, contrasted with purpose, 45; must be tested by experience, 242, 264
Interests, choice of, 142-157, 382; classification of, 144, 383; common nature of, 142; growth of, 138, 370; kernel of moral life, 8, 126, 131, 380; life givers and life savers, 125, 129, 133; make up personality, 125; non-moral if without, 127; personal and impersonal not separable, 154; relation to liking, 128; relation to purpose, 128; recognition of, 137-155; subjects of native, 135
Irresponsibility, cannot be chosen, 39; definition of moral, 24; preparation for, 22; right when for the sake of future moral activity, 29

James, William, *Psychology*, 54, 177; *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, 83, 168
Judgment, of acts, 59, 182, 369; of purposes, 60-75, 369

Language, destroyed by lying, 268
Laziness, always self-defeating, 91
Law, in its relation to morality, 110-118, 378; Fugitive Slave, 113-117; meaning of, 115; Tariff, 111
Lincoln, Abraham, anecdote of, 185; attitude toward emancipation, 244; strength of memory in, 225

Loyalty, breadth of experience and, 332; necessitates openmindedness, 298
Luther, Martin, 320
Lying, causes of, 273, 414; definition of, 416; destroys language, 269; destroys society, 268; self-destructive, 265, 278, 415; treatment of, 274, 415

Memory, 215, 398; association a help to, 221; cultivation of, 400; definition of, 217; exclusion, one aspect of, 223, 399; interest the key to, 222; necessary to human life, 215; qualities associated with, 227; value of, 219, 225, 399
*Message to Garcia,* Hubbard, 253
Moral, action, definition of, 29; decision, the nature of, 5; life involves the power of choice, 18; life, temptations in, 72; responsibility, 19

Non-moral, action, definition of, 29; cases often difficult to distinguish, 20; life compared with anarchy, 74

Obedience, automatic crushes intelligence, 317; instant, occasions for, 315, 420; relation to disobedience, 320, 427; relation to past thought, 319
Obligation, see Duty
Openmindedness, 296, 421; growth in, 306, 424; relation to faith, 308; relation to loyalty, 298, 422; relation to strength, 300; relation to truth, 308
Overscrupulousness, 104-106, 375

Parkman, Francis, 68, 73
Penn, William, 320
Personality, growth of through sympathy, 393
Plans, the characteristic of moral life, 43
Power of redemption, 89
Prejudice, 296, 419; associated with loyalty, 296-298, 422; definition of, 297; due to inadequate knowledge, 306; incompatible with conscientiousness, 103, 115; not a life-preserver, 299; overcoming of, 306, 422, 424; types of common, 301; weakness of, 299
Purpose, 32, 360; classifies acts as right or wrong, 38; contrast with fact, day dream, wish, impulse, 33; definition of, 35; definition of a good, 70; involves moral responsibility, 38; knowledge of, necessary for conscientious decision, 101; power for progress, 44; relation to goodness, 47, 49, 338, 363; tendencies which destroy are always wrong, 91

Qualities, good, grow through the pursuit of interest, 4; needed in all pursuits, 7
Questions, best type of ethical, 345, 347, 348; value of, 344

Recreation, value of, 331, 431
Resolutions, New Years', 217, 400
Responsibility for preparing to become non-responsible, 22, 26, 359; for will, 27; necessary to moral life, 18; obliterated by Huxley's idea of automatic goodness, 17
Rhodes, Cecil, 207

Royce, Josiah, *Religious Aspects of Philosophy*, 175, 191, 392
Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 102

Sacrifice, necessary to goodness, 54, 386; never absolute, 167, 386; never an end in itself, 168; principle for choice of, 162-166; relation to progress, 160, 386; relation to purpose, 163, 169, 387
Science, view of compared with that of ethics, 9
Self, and others not separable, 178; usage of, confused, 174
Self-government, 312, 425; choice of authority in, 320, 427; definition of, 426; moral value of, 322; paradox of, 312, 426; relation to freedom, 313; relation to loyalty, 321
Selfhood, meaning of, 177, 389; necessary to moral life, 175; width of, 176
Selfishness, 173, 388; in act, 184; in character, 184; definition of, 180, 389, 391; diagram of, 390; example of typical, 77; hurts oneself, 187; illusion of, 191; relation to individual standard, 183, 184, 389; test of, 389
Servitude, ascent from, 313; to impulse, 314, 426
Shame, not an accurate test of guilt, 122-124
Shaw, Robert Gould, 150
Sin, always tends to blind itself, 77-83; characteristic of, 83; civil war of, 74; darkness of, 77, 371; definition of, 90, 372; disloyalty to purpose in, 25, 371; distinguished from irresponsibility, 65; misused power in, 86, 371; never seen, 61
Socrates, argument of in the *Crito*, 96
Sophistry, 263
Speech, not the only language, 249
Spencer, Herbert, statement about non-moral acts, 40
Stevenson, Robert Louis, analysis of a moral decision, 97; on prudence, 237
Success, Parkman's definition of, 69; virtues are necessary to, 3, 4
Sympathy, 188, 201, 392; creative power of, 200; definition of, 394; growth of, 198-200, 393; loyalty to the whole in, 195; relation to intelligence, 188; relation to interest, 188, 393; relation to knowledge, 190; relation to realisation, 193

Teachers' Key, 343
Temper, 24
Temptation and attention, 84, 85, 399
Thought, aglow with feeling, 240, 408; and action, 253, 409-412; controls momentary impulse, 44, 410; repels temptation, 263
Time, 325, 429; killing, 328, 430; saved by definiteness of aim, 326, 430, 431; use of in relation to one's purpose, 337; wasting, 327, 330, 333, 430, 432
Truth, is reality, 267, 414
Truthfulness, 265; definition of, 270, 416; guardian of character, 295; holds society together, 268, 414; increases with interest, 277; loyalty and, 289; requires sympathy, 272; short and long view of, 279, 286; tested by intention, 271
Truth-speaking, difficulty of, 281; fine art of, 281, 417; preparation for difficult, 288,

419; qualities needed in, 284, 418, 420; relation to courtesy, 418; relation of love to, 282; requires warmth of feeling, 293; skill needed in, 283

Unselfishness, 181; definition of, 186; diagram of growth in, 185

Virtue, a condition of success, 4; definition of, 76, 369; distinction from goodness in things, 55-58; fitness for manhood, 52; relation to interest, 130-133, 380; as self-government, 75

Will, responsibility for, 27
Work, best moral teacher, 3; how to begin and end, 333-337; increases interest, 138, 140; power of holding to, 335
Worry, definition of, 259, 412
Wyckoff, Walter, experience in Chicago, 79

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